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Las Cruces District Office
Mimbres Resource Area

October 1992

PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN/FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for the balanced management of the Public Land and resources and their various values so that they are considered in the combination that will best serve the needs of the American people. BLM management is based upon the principles of multiple use and sustained yield; a combination of uses that takes into account the long-term needs of future generations of renewable and nonrenewable resources. These resources include recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, fish and wildlife, wilderness and natural, scenic, scientific and historical values.

BLM-NM-PT-92-016-4410

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Las Cruces District Office
1800 Marquess St.
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

IN REPLY REFER TO:
1610 (036)

Dear Reviewer:

Enclosed for your review is the Proposed Mimbres Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Proposed RMP is the Preferred Alternative from the Draft, modified based upon public input. We believe that we have made a diligent effort to develop a Proposed Plan which provides a reasonable balance between protecting significant environmental values, while providing for economic production.

CHANGES FROM THE DRAFT HAVE BEEN HIGHLIGHTED IN BOLD PRINT THROUGHOUT THE DOCUMENT TO MAKE THEM EASIER FOR YOU TO FIND. Individuals wishing to comment on the plan may send comments to the BLM at the address on this letterhead. All comments received will be considered in preparation of the Record of Decision and Approved Plan. All parts of the Proposed Plan may also be protested. Protests must be sent to the Director (760), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Room 407, 1620 L Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20006, within 30 days. The protest must include the following information: (1) name, mailing address, telephone number, and interest of the person filing the protest; (2) a statement of the issue/concern or issues/concerns being protested; (3) a statement of the part or parts being protested; (4) a copy of all documents addressing the issue/concern or issues/concerns that were submitted during the planning process by the protesting party or an indication of the date the issue/concern or issues/concerns were discussed for the records; and (5) a concise statement explaining why the BLM New Mexico State Director's decision is wrong. Only those persons or organizations who participated in the planning process may protest.

At the end of the 30-day protest period, the Proposed Plan, excluding any portions under protest, will become final. Approval will be withheld on any portion of the plan under protest until final action has been completed on such protest. A Record of Decision and Approved Plan will be published following resolution of any protests.

Sincerely,

Jon Joseph

Jon Joseph
Area Manager
Mimbres Resource Area

Enclosure

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MIMBRES
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN
AND
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Draft ( ) Final (X)

The United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management

1. Type of Action: Administrative (X) Legislative ( )

2. Abstract: This Proposed Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) describes and analyzes the expected impacts of implementing the proposed management plan for the Mimbres Resource Area in New Mexico. This proposed RMP is a modified version (as a result of public input) of the preferred alternative described and analyzed in the Draft RMP/EIS.

3. Comments have been requested from the individuals, groups, and agencies shown on the distribution list in Chapter 5.

4. For further information contact:

Jon Joseph, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Telephone (505) 525-8228

5. Date Filed with Environmental Protection Agency: OCT 0 7 1992

6. Date by which protests must be postmarked no later than: NOV 16 1992

RECOMMENDED:

Linda S. C. Rundell
Linda S. C. Rundell
District Manager
Las Cruces District Office

APPROVED:

Larry L. Woodard
Larry L. Woodard
State Director
New Mexico

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

SUMMARY S-1

CHAPTER 1: PURPOSE AND NEED

Purpose and Need 1-1
Location and Description of the Planning Area 1-1
Planning Process 1-1
Planning Issues, Criteria, and Management Concerns 1-3
Issue #1 - Land Ownership Adjustments 1-4
Issue #2 - Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) and Special Management Areas 1-4
Issue #3 - Vehicle Management 1-5
Issue #4 - Access 1-6
Management Concern #1 - Rights-of-Way 1-7
Management Concern #2 - Minerals 1-7
Management Concern #3 - Recreation 1-8
Management Concern #4 - Cultural/Paleontological Resources 1-9
Management Concern #5 - Wildlife Habitat 1-9
Management Concern #6 - Soil, Air and Water 1-10
Management Concern #7 - Vegetation 1-11
Management Concern #8 - Riparian and Arroyo Habitat 1-11
Management Concern #9 - Special Status Species 1-12

CHAPTER 2: PROPOSED PLAN

Introduction 2-1
Alternatives Considered But Not Analyzed 2-1
Continuing Management Guidance and Actions 2-2
Minerals 2-3
Lands 2-10
Access 2-18
Livestock Grazing 2-18
Vegetation 2-23
Soil, Air, and Water 2-23
Fire Management 2-25
Wildlife 2-25
Cultural and Paleontological Resources 2-28
Recreation 2-32
Visual Resources 2-33
Wilderness 2-34
Special Status Species 2-34
Riparian and Arroyo Habitats 2-34
Proposed Plan 2-37
Issue #1 - Land Ownership Adjustments 2-37
Issue #2 - Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) and Special Management Areas 2-38
Issue #3 - Vehicle Management 2-38
Issue #4 - Access 2-40

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

PAGE

Management Concern #1 - Rights-of-Way 2-41
Management Concern #2 - Minerals 2-42
Management Concern #3 - Recreation 2-42
Management Concern #4 - Cultural/Paleontological Resources 2-42
Management Concern #5 - Wildlife Habitat 2-43
Management Concern #6 - Soil, Air and Water 2-43
Management Concern #7 - Vegetation 2-44
Management Concern #8 - Riparian and Arroyo Habitat 2-47
Management Concern #9 - Special Status Species 2-47

CHAPTER 3: AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Introduction 3-1
Topography 3-1
Climate 3-1
Minerals 3-2
Lands 3-4
Access 3-4
Livestock Grazing 3-4
Vegetation 3-6
Soil, Air, and Water 3-9
Fire Management 3-12
Wildlife 3-14
Cultural and Paleontological Resources 3-16
Recreation 3-17
Visual Resources 3-19
Wilderness 3-20
Special Status Species 3-20
Riparian and Arroyo Habitat 3-21
Social and Economic Conditions 3-21

CHAPTER 4: ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Introduction 4-1
Continuing Management Guidance and Actions 4-3
  Minerals 4-3
  Lands 4-3
  Access 4-4
  Livestock Grazing 4-5
  Vegetation 4-7
  Soil, Air, and Water 4-9
  Wildlife 4-10
  Cultural and Paleontological Resources 4-11
  Recreation 4-12
  Visual Resources 4-13
  Wilderness 4-14
  Special Status Species 4-15
  Riparian and Arroyo Habitats 4-16
  Social and Economic Conditions 4-16

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

PAGE

Proposed Plan 4-20
    Minerals 4-20
    Lands 4-23
    Access 4-25
    Livestock Grazing 4-26
    Vegetation 4-30
    Soil, Air, and Water 4-32
    Wildlife 4-36
    Cultural and Paleontological Resources 4-37
    Recreation 4-40
    Visual Resources 4-42
    Wilderness 4-43
    Special Status Species 4-44
    Riparian and Arroyo Habitats 4-47
    Social and Economic Conditions 4-48
Cumulative Impacts 4-52

CHAPTER 5: CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Introduction 5-1
Formal Consultation 5-1
Consistency with Other Plans 5-2
Public Participation 5-2
Public Review of the RMP 5-4
Summary of Small Group Meetings 5-4
Record of Decision 5-4
Protest Process 5-5
Comments and Responses 5-5

MODIFICATIONS AND CORRECTIONS

Introduction M-1
Errata M-1

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Mineral Resources

A-1 BLM Mineral Resources Policy A-1
A-2 Mineral Leasing Proposals A-2

Appendix B: Lands

B-1 Lands and Minerals Disposal Policy B-1
B-2 Set Asides B-6
B-3 Memorandums of Understanding and Cooperative Agreements B-8

Appendix C: Livestock Grazing

C-1 Mimbres Resource Area Allotment Categories C-1
C-2 Present Allotment Status and Category (1991) C-2
C-3 Grazing Management Considerations for the Mimbres Resource Area C-10

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

PAGE

Appendix D: Desired Plant Community D-1

Appendix E: Cultural Resources E-1

Appendix F: Recreation
  F-1 Recreation Opportunity Spectrum F-1
  F-2 Implementation of ORV Designations F-4

Appendix G: Visual Resource Management G-1

Appendix H: Special Management Areas
  H-1 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern H-1
  H-2 Special Management Areas--Trails H-4
  H-2 Supplement Continental Divide National Scenic Trail Alternative Route Comparison H-30
  H-3 Research Natural Areas (RNAs) and National Natural Landmark (NNL) H-32

Appendix I: Wilderness
  I-1 Wilderness Inventory Report, Pena Blanca I-1
  I-2 Wilderness Inventory Report, Organ Needles I-4
  I-3 Wilderness Inventory Report, Gray Peak I-7
  I-4 Wilderness Inventory Report, Apache Box I-10

Appendix J: Gila River Wild and Scenic River
  Inventory Report Summary J-1

Appendix K: Major Soil Types in the Mimbres Resource Area K-1

Appendix L: Special Status Species
  L-1 Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Plant Species Potentially Occurring on Public Land in the Mimbres Resource Area L-1
  L-2 Special Status Animals L-9

GLOSSARY GL-1

REFERENCES R-1

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

PAGE

LIST OF TABLES

Table

S-1 Proposed Plan/Alternative Summary S-3
S-2 Summary of Anticipated Impacts S-9
2-1 Estimated Surface Disturbing Actions Per Year 2-3
2-2 Oil and Gas and Geothermal Leases 2-6
2-3 Oil and Gas Wildcat Wells by County 2-6
2-4 15-Year Projection for Oil and Gas Development 2-6
2-5 15-Year Projection for Geothermal Development 2-7
2-6 15-Year Projection for Locatable Minerals Development 2-9
2-7 Community Pits/Common-Use Areas 2-10
2-8 Withdrawals 2-14
2-9 Existing Classifications in the Mimbres Resource Area 2-13
2-10 Landfill Investigation Status 2-19
2-11 Wildlife Area and Time Stipulations 2-28
2-12 ROS Class Management Acreages in the Organ Mountains Recreation Lands 2-33
2-13 Visual Resource Management Acreages Within the Mimbres Resource Area 2-33
2-14 Mimbres Resource Area Wilderness Recommendations 2-35
2-15 ACECs - Proposed Plan 2-39
2-16 Management Objectives Achieved by Planned Actions - Proposed Plan 2-45
2-17 Wildlife HMPs - Proposed Plan 2-46
2-18 Desired Plant Community Objectives - Proposed Plan 2-48
2-19 Land Treatments - Proposed Plan 2-49
3-1 Oil and Gas Potential for Occurrence (Acres) 3-2
3-2 Geothermal Potential for Occurrence (Acres) 3-3
3-3 Nonenergy Leasable Minerals Potential for Occurrence (Acres) 3-3
3-4 Locatable Minerals Potential for Occurrence (Acres) 3-4
3-5 Salable Minerals Potential for Occurrence (Acres) 3-4
3-6 Land Status (In Acres) 3-5
3-7 Existing Plant Communities 3-7
3-8 Fire History 1977-1989 3-13
3-9 Estimated Recreation Visits by Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) and Activity 3-19
3-10 Population Change 1980 to 1988 3-22
4-1 Estimates Surface Area Disturbed Per Year 4-3
4-2 Availability of Land for Oil and Gas Development Relative to Potential (Acres of Federal Mineral Estate) Proposed Plan 4-21
4-3 Availability of Land for Geothermal Development Relative to Potential (Acres of Federal Mineral Estate) Proposed Plan 4-21
4-4 Availability of Land for Nonenergy Leasable Development Relative to Potential (Acres of Federal Mineral Estate) Proposed Plan 4-22
4-5 Availability of Land for Locatable Mineral Development Relative to Potential (Acres of Federal Mineral Estate) Proposed Plan 4-24
4-6 Availability of Land for Salable Mineral Development Relative to Potential (Acres of Federal Mineral Estate) Proposed Plan 4-24
4-7 Allotments Potentially Impacted by Land Disposal Action Proposed Plan 4-27
5-1 Mimbres RMP Interagency Meetings 5-3
5-2 Partial Listing of Document Recipients 5-5
5-3 List of Preparers 5-6
5-4 Oral and Written Comments Received 5-8

PAGE

LIST OF MAPS

Map

1-1 General Location 1-2

2-1 Existing Rights-of-Way (ROW) Corridors .... follows page 2-16
2-2 Existing Wilderness Study Areas .... follows page 2-34
2-3 Land Ownership Adjustments (Disposal), Proposed Plan .... follows page 2-38
2-4 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Research Natural Areas, and National Natural Landmark, Proposed Plan .... follows Map 2-3
2-5 Butterfield Trail and Continental Divide National Scenic Trail ACECs, Proposed Plan .... follows Map 2-4
2-6 Wild and Scenic River and Wilderness Additions, Proposed Plan .... follows Map 2-5
2-7 Vehicle Designations, Proposed Plan .... follows Map 2-6
2-8 Access Zones, Proposed Plan .... follows page 2-40
2-9 ROW Avoidance/Exclusion Areas, Proposed Plan .... follows page 2-42
2-10 Locatable Minerals - Closed to Mineral Entry, Proposed Plan .... follows Map 2-9
2-11 Leaseable and Salable Minerals-Closed, Proposed Plan .... follows Map 2-10
2-12 Recreation-Special Recreation Management Areas, Proposed Plan .... follows Map 2-11
2-13 Existing and Proposed Wildlife Habitat Management Plan (HMP) Areas .... follows page 2-44
2-14 Proposed Watershed Management Plans, Proposed Plan .... follows Map 2-13
2-15 Land Treatments - Prescribed Burns, Proposed Plan .... follows page 2-48
2-16 Land Treatments - Chemical Brush Control, Proposed Plan .... follows Map 2-15
2-17 Fragile Lands .... follows Map 2-16

3-1 Leasable Mineral Potential .... follows page 3-2
3-2 Locatable Mineral Potential .... follows page 3-4
3-3 Salable Mineral Potential .... follows Map 3-2
3-4 Critical Soils and Impaired Watersheds .... follows page 3-10
3-5 Deer/Antelope Herd Units .... follows page 3-14
3-6 Bighorn Sheep Herd Units .... follows Map 3-5
3-7 VRM Classes .... follows page 3-20

Visual A .... MAP POCKET INSIDE BACK COVER

SUMMARY

SUMMARY

The Proposed Mimbres Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) identifies and analyzes the future options for managing the 3,053,820 acres of public land and 4,126,780 acres of Federal mineral estate administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Las Cruces District, Mimbres Resource Area. The Mimbres Resource Area administers public land and resources (described in detail in Chapters 1 and 3 of this document) in Doña Ana, Luna, Hidalgo, and Grant Counties.

The Proposed Mimbres RMP has been prepared using the BLM planning regulations issued under the authority of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. When completed, the RMP will provide a comprehensive framework for managing and allocating public land and resources within the Mimbres Resource Area over the next 20 years.

The contents of this Proposed RMP/Final EIS primarily focus on resolving key resource management planning issues. These issues are:

- Land Ownership Adjustments
- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) and Special Management Areas (SMAs)
- Vehicle Management
- Access

In addition to the issues, the following management concerns are also addressed: rights-of-way; minerals; recreation; cultural and paleontological resources; wildlife habitat; soil, air, and water; vegetation; riparian and arroyo habitat; and special status species. A major driving force behind the preparation of the RMP is the burgeoning population of the Las Cruces/El Paso areas and the resultant increased demands on the public land within the Mimbres Resource Area.

The resolution of these issues and concerns can only be achieved within the context of proper land-use planning.

Each of the issues, management concerns, and planning criteria are discussed in Chapter 1. Those aspects of current management that are not at issue are covered in the Continuing Management Guidance and Actions section of Chapter 2. The Continuing Management Guidance and Actions were developed primarily from laws, regulations, manuals, and existing land-use plans and apply to all alternatives.

Four RMP alternatives were developed to describe the different management options available to BLM for the Mimbres Resource Area. These alternatives were developed to respond to the issues and concerns expressed by the public and BLM early in the planning process. Each alternative presents a different blend and balance of resource allocations and uses. Together with the Continuing Management Guidance and Actions, each of the alternatives forms a separate, feasible land-use plan.

The alternatives in this EIS are designed to provide general management guidance. Specific projects for a given area or resource will be detailed in future activity plans. These plans discuss more precisely how a particular area or resource is to be managed, and ensure compliance with the approved RMP's resolution of the issues.

The four alternatives developed for the Mimbres RMP are summarized in Table S-1. The Proposed Plan is further described in Chapter 2. The direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts anticipated from the Proposed Plan are described in Chapter 4. A comparative summary of the impacts of all alternatives is included in Table S-2. A complete description of all alternatives is contained in the Draft RMP/EIS.

This document introduces the Proposed RMP which is the Preferred Alternative (D) from the Draft, modified based upon public input. Modifications fall within the range of alternatives previously addressed and, therefore, do not involve new analysis of environmental consequences. The

Proposed RMP contains a summary of the public participation process for the Draft, copies of comment letters, oral testimony excerpts from public hearings, and the BLM's response to these comments.

The Proposed RMP is designed to provide balanced management direction for all resources and land uses within the Mimbres Resource Area.

The overall goal of the planning process is to resolve the issues and management concerns by providing for a combination of resource uses that will protect important or sensitive environmental values, while at the same time allowing development of resources which provide commercial goods and services, and contribute to the social and economic well-being of local communities.

TABLE S-1
PROPOSED PLAN/ALTERNATIVE SUMMARY

ISSUE/CONCERN	PROPOSED PLAN	ALTERNATIVE A	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C
LAND OWNERSHIP ADJUSTMENTS	Dispose of **156,460** acres.	Dispose of 77,145 acres.	Dispose of **41,729** acres.	Dispose of **230,710** acres.
	Acquire 93,110 acres of State trust land.	Acquire 18,980 acres of State trust land	Acquire 129,170 acres of State trust land.	Acquire 56,050 acres of State trust land.
	Acquire 56,210 acres of private land.	Acquire 13,720 acres of private land.	Acquire 97,800 acres of private land.	Acquire 37,480 acres of private land.
	STATE TRUST AND PRIVATE LANDS WOULD BE ACQUIRED PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION. EXCHANGE IS THE PREFERRED METHOD OF ACQUISITION.	**STATE TRUST AND PRIVATE LANDS WOULD BE ACQUIRED PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION. EXCHANGE IS THE PREFERRED METHOD OF ACQUISITION.**	**STATE TRUST AND PRIVATE LANDS WOULD BE ACQUIRED PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION. EXCHANGE IS THE PREFERRED METHOD OF ACQUISITION.**	**STATE TRUST AND PRIVATE LANDS WOULD BE ACQUIRED PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION. EXCHANGE IS THE PREFERRED METHOD OF ACQUISITION.**
ACECs AND OTHER SMAs	Designate **21** ACECs totalling **183,180** acres (includes 4 existing ACECs).	Continue 4 ACECs totalling 16,300 acres.	Designate 30 ACECs totalling **320,340** acres (includes 4 existing ACECs).	Designate 27 ACECs totalling **86,340 ACRES** (includes 4 existing ACECs).
	DESIGNATE 4 RNAs TOTALLING 17,870 ACRES (INCLUDES ONE EXISTING RNA).			
	Designate Butterfield Trail (15,690 acres) and Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (48,450 acres).		Designate Butterfield Trail (15,690 acres) and Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (75,270 acres).	Designate Butterfield Trail (15,690 acres) and Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (21,800 acres).
	STUDY 4 NEW AREAS TOTALLING 33,280 ACRES FOR WILDERNESS SUITABILITY. CONTINUE 14 EXISTING WSAs TOTALLING 390,800 ACRES PLUS 4 WSAs TOTALLING 11,929 ACRES ADMINISTERED BY THE SAFFORD DISTRICT.	Continue interim management on 14 existing wilderness study areas (WSAs) totalling 390,800 acres **PLUS 4 WSAs TOTALLING 11,929 ACRES ADMINISTERED BY THE SAFFORD DISTRICT.**	**STUDY 4 NEW AREAS TOTALLING 33,280 ACRES FOR WILDERNESS SUITABILITY. CONTINUE 14 EXISTING WSAs TOTALLING 390,800 ACRES PLUS 4 WSAs TOTALLING 11,929 ACRES ADMINISTERED BY THE SAFFORD DISTRICT.**	**STUDY 4 NEW AREAS TOTALLING 33,280 ACRES FOR WILDERNESS SUITABILITY. CONTINUE 14 EXISTING WSAs TOTALLING 390,800 ACRES PLUS 4 WSAs TOTALLING 11,929 ACRES ADMINISTERED BY THE SAFFORD DISTRICT.**
	Identify two wild and scenic river study areas for Gila Lower and Middle Box totalling 3,240 acres.		Identify two wild and scenic river study areas for Gila Lower and Middle Box totalling 3,240 acres.	Identify two wild and scenic river study areas for Gila Lower and Middle Box totalling 3,240 acres.

TABLE S-1
PROPOSED PLAN/ALTERNATIVE SUMMARY

ISSUE/CONCERN	PROPOSED PLAN	ALTERNATIVE A	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C
VEHICLE MANAGEMENT	Designate 16,190 acres open.	Continue designation of 4,160 acres open.	Continue designation of 4,160 acres open.	Designate 16,190 acres open.
	Designate 2,371,630 acres limited to existing roads and trails.	Continue designation of 380,430 acres limited to existing roads and trails.	Designate 0 acres limited to existing roads and trails.	Designate 2,827,330 acres limited to existing roads and trails.
	Designate 532,530 acres limited to designated roads and trails.	Continue designation of 74,200 acres limited to designated roads and trails.	Designate 2,938,920 acres limited to designated roads and trails.	Designate 155,400 acres limited to designated roads and trails.
	Designate 133,470 acres closed.	Continue designation of 12,590 acres closed.	Designate 110,790 acres closed.	Designate 54,900 acres closed.
		Continue 2,582,440 acres undesignated.		
ACCESS	Develop access to 19 areas. Emphasis on vehicular or pedestrian access depending on the area and resource conflicts.	BLM's transportation system would rely mainly on the existing system of Federal, State and County roads. Develop other access if needed (through a plan amendment).	BLM's transportation system would rely mainly on the existing system of Federal, State, and County roads. Develop other access if needed (through a plan amendment) with emphasis on pedestrian, non-vehicular access.	Develop access to 24 areas. Emphasis on vehicular access.
RIGHTS-OF-WAY (ROWs)	Designate 264,870 acres ROW exclusion areas and 783,400 acres ROW avoidance areas. Continue existing ROW corridor designations, even where they overlap with exclusion and avoidance areas.	Continue existing ROW corridor designations (61,405 acres).	Designate 317,230 acres ROW exclusion areas and 1,134,570 acres ROW avoidance areas. Continue existing ROW corridor designations, even where they overlap with exclusion and avoidance areas.	Designate 84,950 acres ROW exclusion areas and 303,480 acres ROW avoidance areas. Continue existing ROW corridor designations, even where they overlap with exclusion and avoidance areas.
	Remainder of Resource Area open to ROWs subject to standard stipulations (1,970,180 acres).	Remainder of Resource Area open to ROWs subject to standard stipulations (2,992,415 acres).	Remainder of Resource Area open to ROWs subject to standard stipulations (1,602,020 acres).	Remainder of Resource Area open to ROWs subject to standard stipulations (2,665,390 acres).

TABLE S-1
PROPOSED PLAN/ALTERNATIVE SUMMARY

ISSUE/CONCERN	PROPOSED PLAN	ALTERNATIVE A	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C
MINERALS	Withdraw 64,000 acres from locatable mineral entry.	Continue withdrawal of 19,000 acres from locatable mineral entry.	Withdraw 109,520 acres from locatable mineral entry.	Open to locatable mineral entry.
	Close 331,950 acres to mineral material disposal.	Open to mineral material disposal subject to standard stipulations.	Close 576,800 acres to mineral material disposal.	Close 124,470 acres to mineral material disposal.
	Close 266,950 acres to mineral leasing. Continue current stipulations for fluid mineral leasing for 274,000 acres. 65,000 acres would be open to leasing with no surface occupancy. Remainder of Resource Area open to leasing subject to standard terms and conditions (oil and gas, 3,532,300 acres and geothermal and nonenergy leasables, 3,499,500 acres).	Continue closure of 409,700 acres to mineral leasing. Continue current leasing stipulations for oil and gas, 361,400 acres and geothermal, 360,600 acres. Continue leasing with no surface occupancy on 8,900 acres for oil, gas, and geothermal. Remainder of Resource Area open to mineral leasing subject to standard terms and conditions (oil and gas, 3,358,300 acres; geothermal, 3,326,300 acres; and nonenergy leasables, 3,695,900 acres).	Close 320,940 acres to mineral leasing. Continue current stipulations for mineral leasing for 274,000 acres. 92,000 acres would be open to leasing with no surface occupancy. Remainder of Resource Area open to mineral leasing subject to standard terms and conditions (oil and gas, 3,451,300 acres; geothermal, 3,418,500 acres; and nonenergy leasables, 3,692,500 acres).	Close 0 acres to mineral leasing. Continue current stipulations for oil and gas leasing for 302,000 acres and geothermal, 360,600 acres. 42,300 acres would be open to leasing with no surface occupancy. Remainder of Resource Area open to fluid mineral leasing subject to standard terms and conditions (oil and gas, 3,794,000 acres; geothermal, 3,761,200 acres; and nonenergy leasables, 3,761,200 acres).

TABLE S-1
PROPOSED PLAN/ALTERNATIVE SUMMARY

ISSUE/CONCERN	PROPOSED PLAN	ALTERNATIVE A	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C
RECREATION	Designate 2 additional SRMAs and prepare RAMPs. Continue management of 2 existing SRMAs in accordance with existing Coordinated Resource Management Plans. Remainder of Resource Area managed primarily for dispersed recreation opportunities.	Continue management of 2 existing Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) in accordance with existing Coordinated Resource Management Plans. Remainder of Resource Area managed primarily for dispersed recreation opportunities.	Continue management of 2 existing SRMAs in accordance with existing Coordinated Resource Management Plans. Remainder of Resource Area managed primarily for dispersed recreation opportunities.	Designate 7 additional SRMAs and prepare Recreation Area Management Plans (RAMPs). Acquire and manage 5 State parks (if State is willing to transfer). Develop primitive campsites in 5 areas. Continue management of 2 existing SRMAs in accordance with existing Coordinated Resource Management Plans. Remainder of Resource Area managed primarily for dispersed recreation opportunities.
CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES	Manage in accordance with **ACEC** prescriptions for **10** cultural and **ONE** paleontological **RNA**. Provide interpretation for tourism at 4 sites with emphasis on passive interpretation such as signing. Continue management in accordance with 3 existing Cultural Resource Management Plans. Protect all other sites in accordance with existing policies and laws.	Continue management in accordance with 3 existing Cultural Resource Management Plans. Protect all other sites in accordance with existing policies and laws.	Manage in accordance with prescriptions for 11 cultural and paleontological ACECs. Designate Butterfield Trail for historical resources. Continue management in accordance with 3 existing Cultural Resource Management Plans. Protect all other sites in accordance with existing policies and laws.	Manage in accordance with prescriptions for 11 cultural and paleontological ACECs. Designate Butterfield Trail for historical resources. Provide interpretation for tourism at 4 sites with emphasis on facilities or interpretation. Continue management in accordance with 3 existing Cultural Resource Management Plans. Protect all other sites in accordance with existing policies and laws.
WILDLIFE HABITAT	Develop new HMPs for 6 areas. Continue management of 6 existing HMPs. Population goals for HMP areas would be 3,950 deer, 300 antelope, 600 bighorn, and 400 ibex.	Continue management of 6 existing habitat management plans (HMPs).	Develop new HMPs for 6 areas. Continue management of 6 existing HMPs. Remove ibex from the Florida Mountains. Population goals for HMP areas would be 4,650 deer, 300 antelope, and 600 bighorn.	Develop new HMPs for 6 areas. Continue management of 6 existing HMPs. Population goals for HMP areas would be 2,125 deer, 300 antelope, 600 bighorn, and 400 ibex.

TABLE S-1
PROPOSED PLAN/ALTERNATIVE SUMMARY

ISSUE/CONCERN	PROPOSED PLAN	ALTERNATIVE A	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C
SOIL, AIR, AND WATER	Develop watershed management plans for 8 critical watershed areas (including provisions of existing Gila River Coordinated Resource Management Plan). Continue to incorporate provisions for erosion control and air quality protection into all surface-disturbing actions.	Continue to implement watershed management provisions of existing Gila River Coordinated Resource Management Plan. Continue to incorporate provisions for erosion control and air quality protection into all surface-disturbing actions.	Develop watershed management plans for 8 critical watershed areas (including provisions of existing Gila River Coordinated Resource Management Plan). Continue to incorporate provisions for erosion control and air quality protection into all surface-disturbing actions.	Develop watershed management plans for 8 critical watershed areas (including provisions of existing Gila River Coordinated Resource Management Plan). Continue to incorporate provisions for erosion control and air quality protection into all surface-disturbing actions.
VEGETATION	Continue existing vegetation sale areas and expand into adjacent land disposal areas as needed. Develop new sale area between Deming and Lordsburg.	Continue existing vegetation sale areas.	Continue existing vegetation sale areas in vicinity of Las Cruces. Develop new sale area between Deming and Lordsburg.	Designate land disposal area on East Mesa as vegetation sale area. Develop new sale area between Deming and Lordsburg.
	Primary desired plant community goals would be providing for livestock, wildlife, watershed, aesthetic, and biodiversity values. Desired plant community objectives would be met by a combination of proper grazing management and land treatments consisting of prescribed natural fire and prescribed burning and chemical treatments of brush-dominated areas. Burn or chemically treat a maximum of **20,000** acres per year within a maximum potential area of 677,690 acres for burning and 1,080,530 acres for chemical treatment.	Consider chemical land treatments on 67,742 acres in accordance with existing land use plans.	Primary desired plant community goals would be watershed, aesthetic, and biodiversity values without the use of chemical herbicides for treating brush-dominated areas. Desired plant community objectives would be met by a combination of proper grazing management and land treatments consisting of prescribed natural fire and prescribed burning. Burn a maximum of 10,000 acres per year within a maximum potential area of 677,690 acres.	Primary desired plant community goals would be providing for maximum livestock forage production while maintaining other uses. Desired plant community objectives would be met by a combination of proper grazing management and land treatments consisting of prescribed burning and chemical treatments of brush-dominated areas. Burn or chemically treat a maximum of **20,000** acres per year within a maximum potential area of 677,690 acres for burning and 1,470,370 acres for chemical treatment.
	CONTINUE THE PRESENT EXCLUSION OF LIVESTOCK GRAZING FROM FOUR AREAS AND INITIATE THE EXCLUSION OF GRAZING FROM ONE NEW AREA TOTALLING 8,026 ACRES.	**CONTINUE THE PRESENT EXCLUSION OF LIVESTOCK GRAZING ON 5 ACRES TOTALLING 7,826 ACRES.**	**EXCLUDE LIVESTOCK GRAZING FROM 9 ACECs TOTALLING 201,420 ACRES.**	**CONTINUE THE PRESENT EXCLUSION OF LIVESTOCK GRAZING ON FOUR AREAS TOTALLING 6,546 ACRES.**

TABLE S-1
PROPOSED PLAN/ALTERNATIVE SUMMARY

ISSUE/CONCERN	PROPOSED PLAN	ALTERNATIVE A	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C
RIPARIAN AND ARROYO HABITATS	Manage in accordance with prescriptions for 6 riparian ACECs. Continue management and protection of 4 areas in accordance with existing management plans. Secure instream flows for Gila Lower and Middle Box ACECs when State law allows.	Continue management and protection of 5 areas in accordance with existing management plans.	Manage in accordance with prescriptions of 6 riparian ACECs. Continue management and protection of 4 areas in accordance with existing management plans. Secure instream flows for Gila Lower and Middle Box ACECs when State law allows.	Manage in accordance with prescriptions for 5 riparian ACECs. Continue management and protection of 4 areas in accordance with existing management plans. Secure instream flows Gila Lower and Middle Box ACECs when State law allows.
SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES	Manage in accordance with prescriptions for **10 ACECs AND ONE RNA** with special status species. Continue management and protection in accordance with Organ Mountains Coordinated Resource Management Plan. Elsewhere continue management and protection based upon existing laws, regulations, and policies.	Continue management and protection in accordance with Organ Mountains Coordinated Resource Management Plan. Elsewhere continue management and protection based upon existing laws, regulations, and policies.	Manage in accordance with prescriptions for 11 ACECs with special status species. Continue management and protection in accordance with Organ Mountains Coordinated Resource Management Plan. Elsewhere continue management and protection based upon existing laws, regulations, and policies.	Manage in accordance with prescriptions for 9 ACECs with special status species. Continue management and protection in accordance with Organ Mountains Coordinated Resource Management Plan. Elsewhere continue management and protection based upon existing laws, regulations, and policies.

TABLE S-2
SUMMARY OF ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

RESOURCE	PROPOSED PLAN	ALTERNATIVE A	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C
MINERALS	Land identified for disposal has low potential for oil and gas occurrence and development. Land that remains closed to leasing has low oil and gas potential and moderate geothermal potential and would be unavailable for exploration. Disposal of land near Las Cruces that has moderate to high potential for geothermal resources would preclude leasing and development. Land identified for disposal west of the Organ Mountains and in the Silver City area has high potential for locatable mineral occurrence and loss of those minerals from public ownership would preclude exploration and development. The Lordsburg Playa ACEC would be closed to leasing and therefore unavailable for exploration and development of sodium resources. The Organ/Franklin Mountains ACEC has high potential for locatable minerals occurrence and closing that area to mining would preclude exploration and development. Disposal of land near Las Cruces that has high potential for sand and gravel would preclude development.	Land identified for disposal has low potential for oil and gas occurrence and development. Land that remains closed to leasing has low oil and gas potential and moderate geothermal potential and would be unavailable for exploration. Disposal of land near Las Cruces that has moderate to high potential for geothermal resources would preclude leasing and development. Land identified for disposal west of the Organ Mountains has high potential for locatable mineral occurrence and loss of those minerals from public ownership would preclude exploration and development. Disposal of land near Las Cruces that has high potential for sand and gravel would preclude development.	Land identified for disposal has low potential for oil and gas occurrence and development. Land that remains closed to leasing has low oil and gas potential and moderate geothermal potential and would be unavailable for exploration. Closing the Rincon, San Diego Mountains, Dona Ana Mountains, and Organ/Franklin Mountains ACECs to geothermal leasing and the disposal of land near Las Cruces that has moderate to high potential for geothermal resources would preclude leasing and development. The Lordsburg Playa ACEC would be closed to leasing and therefore unavailable for exploration and development of sodium resources. The Cooke's Range, Florida Mountains, and Organ/Franklin Mountains ACECs have high potential for locatable minerals occurrence and closing those areas to mining would preclude exploration and development. Disposal of land near Las Cruces that has high potential for sand and gravel would preclude development.	Land identified for disposal has low potential for oil and gas occurrence and development. Land that remains closed to leasing has low oil and gas potential and moderate geothermal potential and would be unavailable for exploration. Disposal of land near Las Cruces that has moderate to high potential for geothermal resources would preclude leasing and development. Land identified for disposal west of the Organ Mountains and in the Silver City area has high potential for locatable mineral occurrence and loss of those minerals from public ownership would preclude exploration and development. Disposal of land near Las Cruces that has high potential for sand and gravel would preclude development. **THE NO SURFACE OCCUPANCY STIPULATION ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL WOULD PRECLUDE LEASING AND DEVELOPMENT WITHIN A 500-ACRE AREA OF MODERATE SODIUM POTENTIAL IN THE LORDSBURG PLAYA.**

TABLE S-2
SUMMARY OF ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

RESOURCE	PROPOSED PLAN	ALTERNATIVE A	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C
LANDS	Land ownership adjustments on 5 percent of the Resource Area would help block up public land and improve manageability. ROW exclusion and avoidance areas could require longer routes for ROW applicants.	Land ownership adjustments on 1.4 percent of the Resource Area would help block up public land and improve manageability.	Land ownership adjustments on 2.5 percent of the Resource Area would help block up public land and improve manageability. ROW exclusion and avoidance areas could require longer routes for ROW applicants.	Land ownership adjustments on 8 percent of the Resource Area would help block up public land and improve manageability. ROW exclusion and avoidance areas could require longer routes for ROW applicants.
	THERE WOULD BE A NET DECREASE OF 9,140 ACRES OF PUBLIC LAND RESOURCE AREAWIDE AS A RESULT OF LAND OWNERSHIP ADJUSTMENTS.	**THERE WOULD BE A NET DECREASE OF 44,445 ACRES OF PUBLIC LAND RESOURCE AREAWIDE AS A RESULT OF LAND OWNERSHIP ADJUSTMENTS.**	**THERE WOULD BE A NET INCREASE OF 184,880 ACRES OF PUBLIC LAND RESOURCE AREAWIDE AS A RESULT OF LAND OWNERSHIP ADJUSTMENTS.**	**THERE WOULD BE A NET DECREASE OF 139,180 ACRES OF PUBLIC LAND RESOURCE AREAWIDE AS A RESULT OF LAND OWNERSHIP ADJUSTMENTS.**
ACCESS	Access would not be significantly affected by disposal of isolated parcels, but could be lost in larger blocks of disposal areas if easements are not reserved. Acquisition of State trust and private lands would improve access in ACECs and other SMAs. Vehicle access would be eliminated **ON 133,470 ACRES** south of the Anapra Road and State Road near the Mexican border. Development of new access routes would improve access to many blocked public land areas.	Access could be lost in disposal areas if easements are not reserved. Acquisition of State trust and private lands would improve access.	Access would not be significantly affected by disposal of isolated parcels. Acquisition of State trust and private lands would improve access throughout the Resource Area. Vehicle access would be eliminated in 7 ACECs and within 1 mile of the Mexican border **TOTALLING 110,790 ACRES.**	Access would not be significantly affected by disposal of isolated parcels, but could be lost in larger blocks of disposal areas if easements are not reserved. Acquisition of State trust and private lands would improve access in ACECs and other Special Management Areas (SMAs). Vehicle access would be eliminated **ON 54,900 ACRES** within 1 mile of the Mexican border. Development of new access routes would improve access to most blocked public land areas.

TABLE S-2
SUMMARY OF ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

RESOURCE	PROPOSED PLAN	ALTERNATIVE A	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C
LIVESTOCK GRAZING	Livestock grazing would benefit from acquisition of lands, vehicle use limitations, watershed management plans, and desired plant community changes through chemical vegetation treatments, which would limit interaction between humans and livestock and improve forage conditions. **CONTINUED ELIMINATION OF LIVESTOCK GRAZING IN AREAS WHERE PRESENTLY EXCLUDED WOULD RESULT IN A PERMANENT LOSS OF 90 AUs. LAND OWNERSHIP ADJUSTMENTS WOULD LIKELY NOT AFFECT ON-GOING GRAZING OPERATIONS BUT WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF REVENUE TO THE GOVERNMENT FROM GRAZING FEES ON 61 AUs.**	Livestock grazing would benefit from chemical vegetation treatments which would provide additional forage for livestock. **CONTINUED** elimination of livestock grazing **IN AREAS WHERE PRESENTLY EXCLUDED** would result in a **PERMANENT** loss of 90 AUs. **UNDESIGNATED VEHICLE USE AREAS WOULD** increase conflicts with human users. **LAND OWNER ADJUSTMENTS WOULD LIKELY NOT AFFECT ON-GOING GRAZING OPERATIONS BUT WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF REVENUE TO THE GOVERNMENT FROM GRAZING FEES ON 29 AUs.**	Livestock grazing would benefit from acquisition of lands and vehicle use limitations by limiting the interaction between humans and livestock and maintaining the land base. ACECs which include the elimination of livestock grazing could result in a loss of up to 2,451 AUs. **MOST OF THE LOSS ATTRIBUTABLE TO ELIMINATION OF GRAZING WITHIN ACECS WOULD BE IN HIDALGO COUNTY.**	Livestock grazing would benefit from acquisition of lands, vehicle use limitations, watershed management plans **AND** desired plant community changes through chemical vegetation treatments, which would **IMPROVE GRAZING MANAGEMENT AND** limit interaction between humans and livestock and improve forage conditions. **THE CONTINUED ELIMINATION OF LIVESTOCK GRAZING IN AREAS WHERE PRESENTLY EXCLUDED WOULD RESULT IN A PERMANENT LOSS OF 90 AUs. LAND OWNERSHIP ADJUSTMENTS WOULD LIKELY NOT AFFECT ON-GOING GRAZING OPERATIONS BUT WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF REVENUE TO THE GOVERNMENT FROM GRAZING FEES ON 1,600 AUs.**

TABLE S-2
SUMMARY OF ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

RESOURCE	PROPOSED PLAN	ALTERNATIVE A	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C
VEGETATION	Vegetation resources would be enhanced by land acquisitions, ACECs, vehicle use limitations, watershed management plans, desired plant community, and the elimination of livestock grazing. Land disposal could result in vegetation loss. Vegetation diversity and ground cover would improve on about ½ **MILLION** acres as a result of desired plant community objectives and land treatments.	Vegetation resources would be enhanced by land acquisitions, existing ACECs, chemical brush control, and the elimination of livestock grazing by protecting vegetation resources and increasing public awareness. Land disposal and undesignated vehicle use could result in vegetation loss. Vegetation diversity and ground cover would improve on about 70,000 acres as a result of land treatments.	Vegetation resources would be enhanced by land acquisitions, ACECs, vehicle use limitations, watershed management plans, and the elimination of livestock grazing. Land disposal could result in vegetation loss. Large areas would remain in their present brush-dominated condition.	Vegetation resources would be enhanced by land acquisitions, ACECs, vehicle use limitations, SRMAs, desired plant community, watershed management plans, and elimination of livestock grazing. Land disposal could result in vegetation loss. Vegetation diversity and ground cover would improve on about ½ **MILLION** acres as a result of desired plant community objectives and land treatments.
SOIL, AIR, AND WATER	Soil disturbance and erosion would decrease as a result of SMA management prescriptions, watershed management plans, and six additional HMPs.	Soils would be disturbed by minerals activities and off-road vehicle use on undesignated lands. The soil resource would benefit from HMPs and vegetation treatments.	Soil disturbance and erosion would decrease as a result of SMA management prescriptions, watershed management plans, six additional HMPs, off-road vehicle limitations, and closure of areas to minerals activities.	Soils could be disturbed by land disposal, minerals activities, and access development. The soil resource would benefit from SMA management prescriptions, watershed management plans, and six additional HMPs.
	Airborne dust would be reduced by SMA management prescriptions, watershed management plans, six additional HMPs, off-road designations, ROW restrictions, and vegetation treatments which would protect and enhance surface vegetation and reduce soil surface disturbance.	Short-term increase in airborne dust would occur with off-road vehicle use, minerals activities, and vegetation treatments.	Airborne dust would be reduced by SMA management prescriptions, watershed management plans, six HMPs, off-road vehicle limitations, and closure of areas to minerals activities which would protect and enhance vegetation which would protect the soil surface from wind erosion.	Short-term increases in airborne dust could occur as a result of land disposal, access development, and minerals activities. Watershed management plans, vegetation treatments, and off-road vehicle limitations would reduce airborne dust by reducing vegetation loss and reducing wind erosion of exposed soils.
	Water resources would benefit from planned actions which would enhance or protect surface vegetation, reduce runoff and water erosion of exposed soil, and increase percolation of water into the ground.	Water resources would benefit from watershed management and vegetation treatments.	Water resources would benefit from reduced erosion, increased percolation of water into the ground, and protected or improved watersheds.	Water resources would benefit from planned actions which would enhance or protect surface vegetation, reduce runoff and water erosion of exposed soil, and increase percolation of water into the ground.

TABLE S-2
SUMMARY OF ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

RESOURCE	PROPOSED PLAN	ALTERNATIVE A	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C
WILDLIFE	Wildlife habitat would be protected or enhanced and habitat degradation prevented by closure of areas to minerals activities, elimination of livestock grazing in key habitat areas, off-road vehicle limitations, watershed management plans, vegetation treatments, and SMA management prescriptions.	Wildlife and wildlife habitat would be disturbed by mineral exploration and development and by open and undesignated off-road vehicle use.	Wildlife habitat degradation would be eliminated or reduced and wildlife displacement would not occur as a result of closure of areas to minerals activities, increased animal unit months (AUMs) reserved for wildlife, six additional HMPs, elimination of livestock grazing in key habitat areas, off-road vehicle limitations, watershed management plans, and SMA management prescriptions.	Wildlife habitat could be degraded and wildlife could be displaced by land disposal, off-road vehicle open areas, access development, and minerals activities. Wildlife habitat would be protected or enhanced by watershed management plans, SMA management prescriptions, off-road vehicle limitations, and six additional HMPs.
CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES	Land acquisitions would bring additional cultural resources under BLM administration and protection. Cultural values would be protected by management prescriptions for ACECs. Disturbance and damage of cultural resources would be reduced by off-road vehicle designations, mineral closures, and riparian areas protection. Acquisition of legal public access in the Cooke's Range could result in increased vandalism to cultural resources.	Cultural resources could be disturbed by mining activities and off-road vehicle travel. Diversity of sites on public land could be enhanced by land acquisition and reduced by land disposal. Protection of riparian areas could reduce erosion damage of cultural resources.	Land acquisitions could bring additional cultural resources under BLM administration and protection. Cultural values would be protected by management prescriptions for ACECs. Disturbance and damage of cultural resources would be reduced by off-road vehicle designations, ROW avoidance and exclusion areas, mineral closures, and riparian area protection.	Land acquisitions would bring additional cultural resource under BLM administration and protection. Cultural values would be protected by management prescriptions for ACECs. Disturbance and damage of cultural resources would be reduced by off-road vehicle limitations and riparian area protection. Opening the entire Resource Area to mineral entry, developing new access, and developing primitive campsites could result in increased damage to cultural resources.

TABLE S-2
SUMMARY OF ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

RESOURCE	PROPOSED PLAN	ALTERNATIVE A	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C
RECREATION	Recreation opportunities would be enhanced by land ownership adjustments, development of new access, development of recreation sites, acquisition of six State parks, wildlife HMPs, watershed management, and livestock grazing management. ROW exclusions and mineral development restrictions would help preserve the natural integrity and primitive recreation quality of ACECs. Off-road vehicle use would be open on less than 1 percent of the Resource Area.	Recreation opportunities would be increased by recreation facility development, wildlife habitat actions, watershed stabilization, vegetation treatments, and cultural and paleontological resource management.	Recreation opportunities would be enhanced by land ownership adjustments, development of foot access, wildlife HMPs, prescribed burning, and elimination of livestock grazing. ROW exclusion and avoidance areas and mineral closures would help preserve the natural integrity and primitive recreation quality of those areas. Off-road vehicle opportunities would be **REDUCED** by off-road vehicle designations and land disposal. Elimination of ibex would eliminate opportunities to hunt or photograph ibex on public land in the United States.	Recreation opportunities would be enhanced by land ownership adjustments, development of new access, development of recreation sites, acquisition of 5 State parks, wildlife HMPs, watershed management, and livestock grazing management. ROW exclusion and avoidance areas would help preserve the natural integrity and primitive recreation quality of ACECs. Designation of new open areas would increase opportunities for off-road vehicle use over present levels.
VISUAL RESOURCES	Visual resource management would be enhanced by acquiring lands in Class I and II areas. Visual resources would be protected by SMA designations, vehicle designations, ROW exclusion and avoidance areas, and minerals closures or limitations.	Most activities are currently subject to restrictions that would keep those actions within established visual resource management (VRM) guidelines.	Visual resource management would be enhanced by acquiring lands in Class I and II areas. Visual resources would be protected by SMA designations, vehicle designations, ROW exclusion and avoidance areas, and minerals closures or limitations.	Visual resource management would be enhanced by acquiring lands in Class I and II areas. Visual resources would be protected by SMA designations, vehicle designations, ROW exclusion and avoidance areas, and minerals closures or limitations.
WILDERNESS	Land acquisitions, wilderness designations, wild or scenic river designations, vehicle designations, access development, wildlife HMPs, watershed management, fire management, and establishment of instream flows would enhance wilderness resources and uses by improving the stability of natural systems and resulting in increased naturalness of wilderness resources.	Land acquisitions, vehicle closures, development of foot access routes, wildlife habitat management, watershed management, and vegetation manipulations would enhance wilderness management and values.	Land acquisitions, wilderness, and wild and scenic river studies, vehicle designations, development of foot access, wildlife HMPs, watershed management, elimination of ibex, fire management, elimination of livestock, and establishment of instream flows would enhance wilderness resources and uses by improving the stability of natural systems and resulting in increased naturalness of wilderness resources.	Land acquisitions, wilderness designations, wild or scenic river designations, access development, wildlife HMPs, watershed management, fire management, and establishment of instream flows would enhance wilderness resources and uses by stabilizing soils and improving stability of natural systems.

TABLE S-2
SUMMARY OF ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

RESOURCE	PROPOSED PLAN	ALTERNATIVE A	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C
SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES	Special status plants would benefit from land acquisitions, ACECs and SMA designations, vehicle use limitations, watershed management plans, and the elimination of livestock grazing by limiting use or avoiding an area. Land disposal could have negative impacts to special status plants from the loss of potential habitat.	Special status plants would benefit from acquisition of lands, existing ACECs, chemical brush treatments, and the elimination of livestock grazing by limiting uses which could cause loss of habitat. Land disposal and undesignated vehicle use could have negative impacts to special status species from potential habitat loss. Chemical brush control could cause some habitat loss.	Special status plants would benefit from acquisition of lands, ACECs designations, vehicle use limitations, watershed management plans, and the elimination of livestock grazing by limiting use, avoiding an area, or providing plant and habitat protection. Land disposal actions could have negative impacts to special status plants from the loss of potential habitat.	Special status plants would benefit from acquisition of lands, SMA and ACEC designations, vehicle use limitations, SRMAs, watershed management plans, and the elimination of livestock grazing by limiting use or avoiding an area. Land disposal could have impacts to special status plants from the loss of potential habitat.
	Special status animals would benefit from land acquisitions, SMA management prescriptions, off-road vehicle restrictions, mineral withdrawals, watershed management plans, and elimination of livestock grazing from key habitat areas, which would prevent habitat degradation and animal displacement.	Special status animals would benefit from land acquisitions, existing ACECs, off-road vehicle restrictions, and wildlife HMPs. Disturbances to special status animals could result from dispersed recreation activities, undesignated off-road vehicle use, and minerals activities.	Special status animals would benefit from habitat protection and enhancement and less animal displacement resulting from land acquisitions, SMA management prescriptions, off-road vehicle restrictions, mineral withdrawals, watershed management plans, and elimination of livestock grazing from key habitat areas.	Special status animals would benefit from land acquisitions, SMA management prescriptions, and off-road vehicle restrictions, which would prevent habitat degradation and animal displacement. Off-road vehicle open areas, minerals activities, and recreation activities could cause habitat degradation and animal displacement.
RIPARIAN AND ARROYO HABITATS	Riparian and arroyo habitats would benefit from SMA management prescriptions, closure of areas to minerals activities, elimination of livestock grazing, off-road vehicle restrictions, and six additional HMPs which would protect vegetation, reduce soil disturbance, and protect stream and arroyo channels from disturbance.	Riparian and arroyo habitats would be degraded by minerals activities and off-road vehicle use which would remove vegetation and disturb arroyo channels.	Riparian and arroyo habitats would benefit from SMA management prescriptions, closure of areas to minerals activities, elimination of livestock grazing, off-road vehicle restrictions, and six additional HMPs which would prevent degradation of riparian and arroyo vegetation.	Arroyo habitats could be degraded by land disposal, recreation use, and minerals activities. SMA management prescriptions and six additional HMPs would help protect vegetation, reduce arroyo channel disturbance, and enhance riparian values.

TABLE S-2
SUMMARY OF ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

RESOURCE	PROPOSED PLAN	ALTERNATIVE A	ALTERNATIVE B	ALTERNATIVE C
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS	Land ownership adjustments would result in an increase of $935,000 in property tax **RECEIPTS**. Recreational activities would generate $2 million in gross receipts. Livestock grazing elimination **AND LAND OWNERSHIP ADJUSTMENT** would result in the loss of about $150,000 in gross livestock receipts and $3,600 in grazing fees **ANNUALLY**.	Even though payment-in-lieu of taxes (PILT) payments would be reduced, land disposal would result in an increase of $900,000 in property tax receipts and the value of taxable property in Dona Ana County would increase by $175 million. Minerals closures would not be expected to have a significant economic impact. Recreation facilities would accommodate 175,000 visitor use days per year and generate $750,000 in gross receipts.	Land disposal would result in an increase of $27,000 in property tax receipts and the property tax base in Dona Ana County would increase by $500,000. Urban expansion would be largely limited to existing private lands, which would concentrate growth to valley land and increase development pressure on farmland. PILT payments in Luna, Hidalgo and Grant counties would decrease by $30,000 due to disposal, but would increase by approximately $135,000 as a result of land acquisitions. Livestock grazing elimination in 9 ACECs would result in the loss of $696,000 in livestock gross receipts including $58,000 in BLM grazing fees **ANNUALLY. THIS WOULD BE MOSTLY IN HIDALGO COUNTY WHERE ECONOMIC IMPACTS TO INDIVIDUAL RANCHERS AND THE COUNTY WOULD LIKELY BE SIGNIFICANT.** Minerals closures would not be expected to have a significant impact on the minerals industry. Recreation and cultural facilities would accommodate 325,000 visitor days and generate $1,625,000 in gross receipts. Wildlife forage allocations could cause a net decrease of $95,000 in gross receipts from livestock.	Land disposal would result in an increase of $924,000 in tax receipts in Dona Ana County. Luna and Grant Counties would suffer a net loss of $6,144 as a result of decreased PILT payments from land disposal that would not be entirely compensated by increase PILT payments from acquisition and increased tax revenues from disposal. Recreational activities would produce $5 million in gross receipts. Hunter days would increase by 6 percent and hunting gross receipts would increase by $54,000. **LAND OWNERSHIP ADJUSTMENT WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF ABOUT $127,000 IN GROSS RECEIPTS AND $37,000 IN GRAZING FEES ANNUALLY.**

CHAPTER 1

CHAPTER 1 PURPOSE AND NEED

PURPOSE AND NEED

The Mimbres Resource Management Plan (RMP) has been prepared to provide a comprehensive framework for managing public land and for allocating resources during the next 20 years using the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. These two principles are defined in the Glossary. The RMP establishes areas for limited, restricted, or exclusive uses, levels of production, allowable resource uses, resource condition objectives, program uses, program constraints, and general management direction.

This document includes the Proposed RMP and a Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which fulfill the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements for comprehensive land-use planning for public land. The requirement (by Executive Order 11644) that public land be designated as "open", "limited", or "closed" to off-road vehicle use will also be met. Plan amendments, if necessary, will keep the RMP current with resource management needs and policies.

Between 1976 and 1982, the Mimbres Resource Area prepared land-use plans, known as Management Framework Plans (MFPs), for the majority of the public surface and minerals within its area of jurisdiction. Valid planning decisions found in the Gila and Southern Rio Grande MFPs and various amendments are available for review in the Mimbres Resource Area Office.

LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING AREA

The Mimbres Resource Area **(FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE LAS CRUCES/LORDSBURG RESOURCE AREA)** is located in the southwest portion of New Mexico and contains approximately 3,053,820 acres of public land and 4,126,780 acres of Federal minerals (see Map 1-1). The public land is located in Doña Ana, Grant, Luna, and Hidalgo Counties. Generally, the public land is well-blocked in Doña Ana County, southern Luna County and portions of Hidalgo County. Private and State trust lands are concentrated in much of Grant County, southern Hidalgo County and northern Luna County.

PLANNING PROCESS

The BLM RMP process consists of nine basic steps. This process requires the use of an interdisciplinary team of resource specialists for the completion of each step. The steps described in the planning regulations and followed in preparing this RMP are summarized below. Publication of this document is part of Step 8, selection of the resource management plan.

Step 1. Identification of Issues

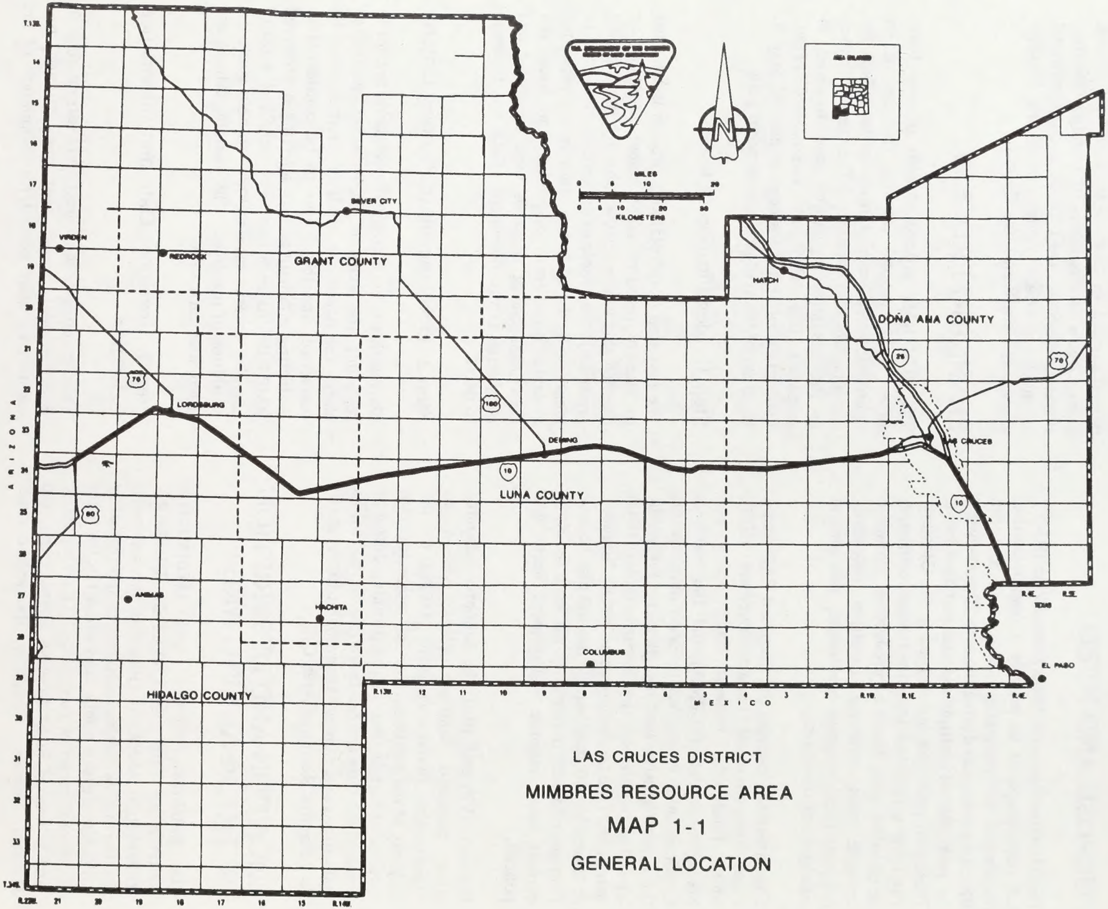
The first step in the planning process is intended to identify resource management problems or conflicts that can be resolved through the planning process. These problems or conflicts (issues) were identified by the BLM and other agency personnel as well as members of the public. Four issues and nine management concerns were identified and considered in this document. Each are discussed in detail.

Step 2. Development of Planning Criteria

During this step, preliminary decisions are made regarding the kinds of information needed to clarify the issues, the kinds of alternatives to be developed, and the factors to be considered in evaluating alternatives and selecting a preferred RMP/EIS. As each issue was identified, a list of planning criteria was developed to help guide the resolution of that issue. The planning criteria are listed after each issue.

Step 3. Inventory Data and Information Collection

This step involves the collection of various kinds of environmental, social, economic resource, and institutional data needed for completion of the


GRANT COUNTY
SILVER CITY
VIRDEN
REDROCK
LORDSBURG
DEMING
LUNA COUNTY
HIDALGO COUNTY
ANIMAS
HACHITA
COLUMBUS
HATCH
DOÑA ANA COUNTY
LAS CRUCES
EL PASO
TEXAS
A R I Z O N A
M E X I C O
70
180
10
26
80
MILES
0 5 10 20
KILOMETERS
0 5 10 20 30
T.13S.
T.34S.
R.22W.
R.14W.
R.13W.
R.1W.
R.1E.
R.4E.
R.5E.

LAS CRUCES DISTRICT

MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

MAP 1-1

GENERAL LOCATION

process. This step can include detailed field studies, literature studies, or consultation with appropriate professionals. In most cases, this process is limited to inventories needed to address the issues.

Step 4. Management Situation Analysis (MSA)

The step calls for deliberate assessment of the current situation. It includes a description of current BLM management guidance, a discussion of existing problems and opportunities for solving them, and a consolidation of existing data needed to analyze and resolve the identified issues. The end result of this step is the development of an unpublished companion document known as the MSA. That document is used to develop the Continuing Management Guidance and Actions section of the RMP. The MSA is used as a basis for compiling the Affected Environment chapter of the RMP. A copy of the MSA is available for review in the Mimbres Resource Area Office.

Step 5. Formulation of Alternatives

During this step several complete, reasonable resource management alternatives are prepared, including one for no action and others that strive to resolve the issues while placing emphasis either on environmental protection or resource production. This important section of the RMP has been incorporated into Chapter 2.

Step 6. Estimation of Effects of Alternatives

The physical, biological, economic, and social effects of implementing each alternative are estimated in order to allow for a comparative evaluation of impacts. This step, known as the Environmental Consequences section, is Chapter 4 in this RMP.

Step 7. Selection of the Preferred Alternative

Based on the information generated during Step 6, the District Manager identifies and recommends a preferred alternative to the State Director. The Draft RMP/EIS document is then prepared and distributed for public review. Alternative D was selected by management as the preferred alternative.

Step 8. Selection of the Resource Management Plan

Based on the results of public review and comment, the District Manager will select and recommend to the State Director various proposals or alternatives to comprise the Proposed RMP and publish it along with a Final EIS. We are presently at this step in the planning process. A final decision is made after a 60-day Governor's Consistency Review and a 30-day protest period on the Final EIS are completed. A Record of Decision (ROD) and Approved RMP will then be published, following resolution of any protests.

Step 9. Monitoring and Evaluation

This step involves the collection and analysis of long-term resource condition and trend data to determine the effectiveness of the plan in resolving the identified issues, and to ensure that implementation of the plan is achieving the desired results. Monitoring continues from the time the RMP is adopted until changing conditions require a revision of the whole plan or any portion of it.

PLANNING ISSUES, CRITERIA, AND MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

The BLM planning regulations equate land-use planning with problem solving and issue resolution. An issue is defined as an opportunity, conflict, or problem, regarding the use or management of public land and resources.

Planning criteria are the standards, rules, and measures used for data collection and alternative formulation, which will guide final plan selection. Planning criteria are taken from appropriate laws and regulations, BLM manuals and directives, and concerns expressed in meetings, and consultations, both with the public and other agencies.

Management concerns are those nonissue related procedures or land-use allocations which have proven, during the preparation of this RMP/EIS, to need modification. Management concerns focus on use conflicts, requirements, or conditions that cannot be resolved administratively and did not, during initial public scoping appear to meet the criteria to qualify as a planning issue but were identified for resolution in the Mimbres RMP.

Issue 1: Land Ownership Adjustments

Needed Decisions

To resolve this issue, answers are needed to the following questions:

- Which lands should BLM acquire (by exchange, purchase, or donation) to consolidate its land pattern and to enhance multiple-use programs?
- Which lands should BLM retain in public ownership?
- Which lands should BLM dispose of and why?

Planning Criteria

To develop answers for the needed questions identified above, BLM will consider:

- Multiple-use values (whether or not significant or unique values exist)
- Land and resource management efficiency
- Service to the public (i.e., meeting community needs, etc.)
- Public interest and attitudes
- Existing land uses
- Surrounding land ownership pattern
- Adjacent land uses
- Need for public and administrative access
- FLPMA, Section 203 sale criteria
  - parcels difficult and uneconomic to manage
  - purpose of a previous acquisition is no longer required
  - disposal of a parcel will serve important public purposes
- Social and economic effects
- Effects on other resources and uses
- The degree to which changes in ownership will promote consolidation of public land without creating a scattered land pattern or split-estate
- Public health and safety

Issue 2: Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) and Other Special Management Areas (SMAs)

Needed Decisions

To resolve this issue, answers are needed to the following questions:

- Which public land should be designated as biological, cultural, scenic or natural hazard ACECs and how should they be managed (the RMP must clearly identify management objectives for each area and what restrictions if any apply to other uses)?
- Is the Gila River (BLM-administered public land in the Gila Lower Box between Redrock and Virden, New Mexico and the Gila Middle Box upstream from Redrock, New Mexico) suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System? How should these areas be managed?
- Which routes should be considered as possible locations for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail? Which route should be ultimately designated?

- Is land in the Peloncillo Mountains (between the Coronado National Forest and Antelope Pass) suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System?

- Is land in the Organ Mountains (between Soledad Canyon and Peña Blanca and between the Organ Mountains Wilderness Study Area (WSA) and Squaw Peak) suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System?

- Is land in the Apache Box area suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System?

- Which public land should be identified for other forms of special management (such as scenic or backcountry byways, watchable wildlife areas, and "Adventures in the Past") and how should it be managed?

Planning Criteria

To develop answers for the needed decisions identified above, BLM will consider:

- Resource values

- Manageability of an area to preserve its resource value

- Existing ACEC, wilderness, and wild and scenic river representation

- Current and potential land uses

- Effects of designation on other resources and uses

- Effects of nondesignation on resource values

- Social and economic effects

- Public interest and attitudes

- Consistency of designation with resource plans of other Federal, State, and local governments and the Indian tribes

- Consultation with Federal, State and local agencies, the scientific community, and individuals

- Long-term (more than 20 years) versus short-term (less than 20 years) benefits

- Management concerns along the U.S./Mexican border

- Public health and safety

Issue 3: Vehicle Management

Needed Decisions

To resolve this issue, answers are needed to the following questions:

- What public land should be designated as open, limited, or closed to vehicle use?

- What areas should be managed for intensive off-road vehicle (ORV) use?

- Within restricted areas, how should vehicle use for authorized activities (other than recreational) be accommodated?

Planning Criteria

To develop answers for the needed decisions identified above, BLM will consider:

- Level of existing use and location of areas currently being used by ORVs

- Demand for additional ORV opportunities

- Types of ORVs being used

- Effects of ORVs use on other resources and uses

- Effects of ORV restrictions or closures on other resources
- Effects of ORV designations on other uses such as livestock management, law enforcement, and mineral exploration and development
- BLM administrative needs
- Public interest and attitudes
- Manageability of an area to accomplish the objectives of a designation
- Management concerns along the U.S./Mexican border
- Public health and safety
- Social and economic effects

Issue 4: Access

Needed Decisions

To resolve this issue, answers are needed to the following questions:

- Where should BLM provide access to or across public land and what type of access is needed?
- What actions should BLM take to provide access to or across public land?
- How should BLM coordinate with other land and resource management agencies to ensure access to State trust, National Forest, and public lands?

Planning Criteria

To develop answers for the needed decisions identified above, BLM will consider:

- Extent of public land and the size of public land parcels
- Resource values
- Availability and type of existing access
- Public needs and preferences for access
- Agency administrative needs for access
- Coordination with State and local governments and other Federal agencies
- Effects of the availability of access on existing resources and uses
- Compatibility with adjoining land uses
- How the public land is being used and managed
- Management concerns along the U.S./Mexico border
- Public health and safety
- Social and economic effects
- Effects on adjacent private landowners
- Potential for development of access through consolidation of public land or development of alternative routes, followed by negotiated easement acquisition, and as a last resort, condemnation

Management Concern 1: Rights-of-Way

Needed Decisions

To resolve this management concern, answers are needed to the following questions:

- Which public land should be designated for rights-of-way corridors, avoidance areas, and exclusion areas?
- What terms and conditions should be applied to rights-of-way grants for corridors and sites and for use outside corridors and sites?
- Which existing public land transportation and utility corridors should not be designated as a rights-of-way corridor upon plan approval?

Planning Criteria

To develop answers for the needed questions identified above, BLM will consider:

- Service to the public
- Resource values and uses
- Adjacent land uses
- Compatibility with other utility rights-of-way
- Presence of existing corridors and rights-of-way (and confining new rights-of-ways to existing corridors and sites to the extent possible)
- Social and economic effects
- Effects on the resources and uses

Management Concern 2: Minerals

Needed Decisions

To resolve this management concern, answers are needed to the following questions:

- Which public land should be open to the operation of the mining laws? Which should be closed?
- What terms or conditions should be applied to public land open to the operation of the mining laws?
- Which public land should be open to mineral material (sand and gravel, for instance) disposal? Which should be closed?
- What terms, conditions, or special stipulations should be applied to public land open to mineral material disposal activities?
- Which public land should be considered for competitive mineral material sales?
- Which public land should be open to energy and nonenergy leasable mineral development subject to the terms and conditions of the standard lease form, minor constraints such as seasonal restrictions, or major constraints such as no surface occupancy?
- Which public land should be closed to energy and nonenergy mineral leasing?

Planning Criteria

To develop answers for the needed decisions identified above, BLM will consider:

- Effects of mineral exploration and development on other resources and uses
- Mineral potential and the probability of a discovery
- Demand for mineral resources
- Lands available for mineral production
- Effects of environmental protection stipulations on claimants, lessees, and permittees
- Success of protective stipulations in accomplishing objectives
- Effects on the mineral industry of closing lands
- Public health and safety
- Social and economic effects

Management Concern 3: Recreation

Needed Decisions

- Which public land should be managed with emphasis on outdoor recreation opportunities?
- What recreation setting should be maintained and what activities should BLM provide for?
- What recreation management strategies should be developed and what actions should BLM take to maintain established recreation settings?
- What activity planning priorities should BLM establish for the Resource Area?
- Which public land should be identified and managed for interpretation of natural and cultural resources and public education (such as backcountry byways, watchable wildlife areas)?

Planning Criteria

To develop answers for the needed decisions identified above, BLM will consider:

- Existing recreation uses, use areas, and facilities
- Public demand for additional recreation activities, settings, and experiences
- Compatibility with adjacent land uses and resources
- Effects of recreation uses on other resources and uses
- Public health and safety
- Planned or projected recreation developments
- Public interest and attitudes
- Potential for interpretation of resource management objectives
- Social and economic effects

Management Concern 4: Cultural and Paleontological Resources

Needed Decisions

To resolve this management concern, answers are needed to the following questions:

- What management objectives should BLM establish for cultural and paleontological resources in the Resource Area?
- What actions should BLM take to achieve these objectives (such as preparation and implementation of cultural resource management plans and designation of ACECs or other SMAs)?

Planning Criteria

To develop answers for the needed decisions identified above, BLM will consider:

- Relative importance and sensitivity of known and anticipated cultural and paleontological resources
- Geographic distribution and density of cultural and paleontological resources
- Feasibility of attaining cultural and paleontological resource management objectives
- Need or desirability of cultural and paleontological resource management objectives
- Threats to cultural and paleontological resources
- Public interest and attitudes
- Effects of cultural and paleontological resource management on other resources and uses
- Compatibility with adjacent land uses
- Social and economic effects

Management Concern 5: Wildlife Habitat

Needed Decisions

To resolve this management concern, answers are needed to the following questions:

- What wildlife species and habitats should receive management priority? What maintenance, improvement, and expansion objectives should BLM establish for these species and habitats?
- Which priority areas need Habitat Management Plans (HMPs)?
- What actions should BLM take to achieve the objectives for priority species and habitats?
- What wildlife population goals should be established, considering existing and anticipated habitat capacity?
- What monitoring objectives should BLM establish for priority habitat?
- Where, with what methods, and at what times of the year should animal damage (predator) control activities be authorized?

Planning Criteria

To develop answers for the needed decisions identified above, BLM will consider:

- Existing HMPs
- Input from Federal and State wildlife agencies and the scientific community
- Species and habitats of high public or scientific interest

- Extent of species and habitats including current range, key areas, and potential habitat
- Species population goals
- Forage allocation
- Species habitat requirements
- Vegetation communities and habitat condition
- Effects of other resource uses
- Social and economic effects
- Presence of exotic species and conflicts between exotic and native species
- Maintenance or enhancement of biological diversity

Management Concern 6: Soil, Air and Water

Needed Decisions

To resolve this management concern, answers are needed to the following questions:

- What objectives should BLM establish for watershed management and control of soil erosion?
- What management objectives should BLM establish for maintenance of air quality in the Resource Area?
- What actions should BLM take to achieve these objectives (such as preparation and implementation of watershed management plans)?
- What water quality objectives should BLM establish for the Resource Area and what actions should be taken to achieve those objectives?
- Where should BLM focus its efforts to secure instream flows for riparian, wildlife, and recreation purposes (if such a provision ever exists under New Mexico State law)?

Planning Criteria

To develop answers for the needed decisions identified above, BLM will consider:

- Soil type
- Effectiveness of existing erosion control structures and the need for additional structures
- Extent of saline/alkali soils
- Watershed condition in areas of saline/alkali soils
- Methods to reduce runoff and erosion
- Current and potential land uses
- Air quality standards of the Clean Air Act (as amended, 1977)
- Air quality standards of the State of New Mexico
- Current and future land uses that may affect air quality
- Values and uses of water resources
- Demand for additional use of water resources
- Water quality and trend
- Watershed condition and trend
- Watershed productivity potential
- Manageability of the water resources

- Other resource uses of water resources
- State of New Mexico and Federal water quality standards
- Social and economic effects

Management Concern 7: Vegetation

Needed Decisions

To resolve this management concern, answers are needed to the following questions:

- On which public land should BLM establish vegetation sale areas for native plants and firewood?
- What vegetation management objectives should BLM develop for maintenance or re-establishment of desired plant communities and what actions should be taken to achieve those objectives?
- On which public land should land treatments (vegetation manipulation) be used to protect, restore, establish, or enhance vegetation species? What types of treatments should BLM use (root plow, herbicides, prescribed fire)?

Planning Criteria

To develop answers for the needed decisions identified above, BLM will consider:

- Available access and demand
- Effects on other resources
- Social and economic effects
- Areas that require increased vegetation cover to reduce soil erosion, increase livestock forage, and improve wildlife habitat
- Suitability of natural vs. artificial revegetation techniques
- Use of land treatments to maintain or improve plant communities
- Current and potential land uses
- Presence of special status plants
- Input from the scientific community
- Potential for location of vegetation sale areas in land disposal areas and mineral material sale areas
- Condition and trend of native plant communities
- Maintenance or enhancement of biological diversity
- Presence of exotic species and conflicts between exotic species and native species

Management Concern 8: Riparian and Arroyo Habitats

Needed Decisions

To resolve this management concern, answers are needed to the following questions:

- Which riparian and arroyo habitat areas should be designated as ACECs or receive other special management designations?
- What management prescriptions are needed to protect or restore riparian and arroyo habitat areas in the Mimbres Resource Area?

- Where should BLM focus its efforts to secure instream flows for maintenance of riparian habitat (should this become a possibility)?

Planning Criteria

- Condition and trend of riparian vegetation

- Condition and trend of arroyo habitat vegetation

- Resource values

- Current and potential land uses

- Effects on other resources and uses

- Social and economic effects

- Potential for improvement

- Watershed condition and trend

Management Concern 9: Special Status Species

Needed Decisions

To resolve this management concern, answers are needed to the following questions:

- What management objectives should BLM establish for protection and enhancement of plant or animal special status species?

- What actions should BLM take to improve habitat conditions, aid in recovery efforts, and resolve resource conflicts for listed, proposed and candidate special status species?

Planning Criteria

To develop answers for the needed decisions identified above, BLM will consider:

- Input from Federal and State agencies and the scientific community

- Extent of species habitat, including current range, key areas, and potential habitat

- Species population goals and habitat requirements

- Effects of other resource uses

- Social and economic effects

- Conflicts with other uses

- Recovery plan goals and objectives and the potential to aid in recovery efforts

CHAPTER 2

CHAPTER 2 PROPOSED PLAN

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains two sections, "Continuing Management Guidance and Actions" and "The **PROPOSED PLAN.**" Continuing Management Guidance and Actions is a summary of how the Mimbres Resource Area **WOULD CONTINUE TO BE MANAGED FOR RESOURCE USES THAT ARE NOT ISSUES OR MANAGEMENT CONCERNS.** The **PROPOSED PLAN** Section is a description of the possible solutions to issue questions and management concerns. The public land, resources, and programs not affected by the resolution of the issues in the **PROPOSED PLAN** will be managed as outlined in the Continuing Management and Actions section.

The **PROPOSED PLAN** complies with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) requirement that the public land be managed for multiple use and sustained yield. Together with the Continuing Management Guidance and Actions, the **PROPOSED PLAN** forms a **COMPLETE** and feasible land-use plan.

Table S-1, located in the Summary at the beginning of this document, summarizes the components of the **PROPOSED PLAN** and each alternative **PRESENTED IN THE DRAFT RMP/EIS.** Table S-2 summarizes the impacts by alternative.

The **PROPOSED PLAN** is designed to provide general management guidance. Specific projects for a given area or resource will be detailed as necessary in activity plans with accompanying environmental analyses. These activity plans will discuss more precisely how a particular area or resource will be managed, and will comply with the approved RMP's resolution of the issues and management concerns. To the extent possible, every attempt will be made to make as many decisions as possible at the RMP stage that can be immediately implemented without a subsequent activity plan. Where there are overlapping proposed activity plans, every effort will be made to prepare Coordinated Resource Management Plans rather than separate activity plans.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED ANALYSIS

Appendix H-1 describes **EIGHT** areas that were considered for proposal as areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs) but were subsequently dropped for the reasons specified.

CONTINUING MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE AND ACTIONS

THIS CHAPTER CONTAINS TWO SECTIONS "CONTINUING MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE AND ACTIONS" AND "THE PROPOSED PLAN." THE CONTINUING MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE AND ACTIONS IS A SUMMARY OF BASIC MANAGEMENT POLICY THAT WILL CONTINUE WITHOUT CHANGE UNDER THE PROPOSED PLAN. PUBLIC LAND, RESOURCES, AND PROGRAMS NOT AFFECTED BY THE RESOLUTION OF ISSUES AND MANAGEMENT CONCERNS WILL BE MANAGED AS OUTLINED IN THIS SECTION. IT IS BASED ON DETAILED DISCUSSIONS OF THE "EXISTING MANAGEMENT SITUATION" SECTION OF THE MANAGEMENT SITUATION ANALYSIS (MSA), A COMPANION DOCUMENT TO THE RMP/EIS.

Management guidance for resource programs include laws, Executive Orders, regulations, Department of the Interior manuals, BLM manuals and instruction memoranda [Washington, New Mexico State Office (NMSO), and Las Cruces District Office]. Valid planning decisions found in the Gila and Southern Rio Grande Management Framework Plans (MFPs) and various amendments are available for review in the Mimbres Resource Area Office. Together, these form the basis for the Continuing Management Guidance and Actions **THAT WILL CONTINUE** for public land resources and programs in the Mimbres Resource Area. Table 2-1 displays the type, number, and size of continuing actions per year for the 20-year life of the RMP.

TABLE 2-1
ESTIMATED SURFACE DISTURBING ACTIONS PER YEAR

TYPE OF ACTION	AVERAGE NO. OF ACTIONS	SIZE OF ACTION (ACRES)
Oil & Gas Exploration Wells	0.3	2
Oil & Gas Access Roads	0.3	3
Geothermal Exploration Wells	0.3	1
Geothermal Access Roads	0.3	3
Mining Notices	20	1.5
Mining Plans of Operation	1.3	5.8
Mineral Material Sales	166	0.5
Fences	4	0.6
Pipelines	4	5
Troughs	4	0.1
Storage Tanks	1	0.1
Wells	1	1
Prescribed Burning	1	2
Leases-2920	0.25	20
Permits-2920	2	5
R&PPs	4	20
Linear ROWs	40	15
Site ROWs	10	5
Vegetative Products Removal	500	0.0001
Water Spreaders	0.25	0.1
Wire Checks	2	0.1
Wildfires	5	25
Spring Developments	1	0.1
Umbrella Catchments	1	0.1
Exclosures	1	0.25

Source: BLM Files, 1990.

MINERALS

The policy of the BLM is to make mineral resources available in accordance with the objectives of the Mining and Minerals Policy Act of 1970 and the National Materials and Minerals Policy Research and Development Act of 1980. These acts require the Federal Government to facilitate the development of mineral resources to meet National, regional, and local needs for domestic and defensive purposes. The BLM is also responsible for ensuring that mineral development is carried out in a manner which minimizes environmental damage and provides for the rehabilitation of affected land. The BLM official policy appears in Appendix A-1. Most of the public land in the Mimbres Resource Area is available for mineral entry, except where restricted by withdrawals for military, flood control, conservation, or other specific purposes. Unless otherwise specified, all acreage figures in this section refer to Federal mineral estate managed by the BLM.

Leasables

Most phases of exploration, development, and production operations require National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review before authorization. Exceptions are oil and gas geophysical work. Pre-lease geophysical exploration (including the drilling of geothermal temperature-gradient holes and oil and gas seismic operations) is authorized by a permit or conducted under a Notice of Intent. However, all other operations including exploratory drilling and extraction and production of oil, gas, and geothermal resources requires a lease.

Exploration usually begins with geophysical prospecting. In oil and gas exploration, the primary geophysical methods utilize seismic data. One method involves the use of vibrator trucks which drop heavy metal plates on the ground. The resulting impact generates seismic waves that are recorded and analyzed. Another method uses underground explosions to generate the seismic waves. Shallow holes are drilled, loaded with charges, and then detonated. This "shot hole" technique yields seismic data similar to that of the vibrator method. These kinds of geophysical exploration methods are conducted along existing roads and trails.

Electrical resistivity and temperature-gradient surveys are geophysical techniques that are commonly used in geothermal exploration. The electrical resistivity survey involves transmitting an electric current through electrodes that are placed in the ground. These surveys are usually conducted along existing roads and trails.

Temperature-gradient surveys require the drilling of shallow holes that are usually less than 500 feet in depth. The holes are drilled with truck-mounted drill rigs adjacent to existing roads and trails. The drill site usually requires no clearing or levelling and covers an area of about 25 feet by 25 feet.

If data from geophysical prospecting are favorable, "target" areas are delineated and a site is selected for drilling a "wildcat" well. An access road is usually built to haul in the heavy equipment needed for the drilling operations. Roads are typically 16 feet wide with a 50 foot right-of-way width. To drill a typical oil and gas or geothermal well, an area of 2 acres is cleared and leveled for placement of the drilling rig and associated equipment and structures. If the wildcat well results in a "dry hole", the well is plugged and abandoned. If the well shows resource potential, more wells are drilled. The result may be a producing oil and gas field. For geothermal operations, if the well produces adequate hot water or steam, more wells may be drilled for electrical power generation. For direct-use applications, one well may be all that is needed.

Surface disturbance increases during the development and production stages of oil and gas operations. More wells are drilled, production equipment is installed, and access roads and facility sites are built. The situation is similar for development and production of a geothermal field for electrical power generation. However, geothermal development and production of low-temperature, direct-use facilities is not nearly as extensive. Domestic water heating, space heating, and greenhouse production may only utilize one or two wells. The hot water can only be transported for several miles before losing so much heat that utilization becomes uneconomic. Consequently, most direct-use geothermal production operations are located at or very near the well site.

After an oil or gas reservoir is depleted, wells are plugged and all equipment and structures are removed. All roads, well sites, and other disturbed areas are then rehabilitated using the Resource Area's Reclamation and Reseeding Guidelines for guidance. Abandonment of geothermal operations would be the same. However, if the water source is never depleted, a geothermal reservoir could produce hot water indefinitely.

CURRENT LEASE STATUS

Table 2-2 shows the total number of leases and lease acreage by County within the Resource Area as of June 1990.

Exploration History

The Resource Area is relatively unexplored for oil and gas. Geophysical exploration increased significantly between 1978 and 1983. About 94 exploration permits were issued during this period. Most of the exploration involved hundreds of miles of seismic lines using vibrator trucks. During the 5-year period from 1985 through 1989, nine exploration permits were issued and two wildcat wells were drilled.

To date, about 80 wildcat wells have been drilled in the Resource Area (New Mexico Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources 1990). Seven of the wells had shows of oil or gas. All of the shows were on private land. Twenty-three of these wells were drilled on Federal mineral estate and were all dry holes. Table 2-3 lists all of the wildcat wells by

County that have been drilled in the Resource Area.

Geothermal exploration in the Resource Area was extensive in the late 1970's and early 1980's. Exploration began with geologic reconnaissance and progressed through various types of geophysical exploration to the drilling of temperature-gradient holes. As target areas were delineated, test wells were drilled. To date, there are 12 wells in the Resource Area that are either currently producing hot water or are capable of production. These wells are all located on Federal geothermal leases.

15-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTIONS

Oil and Gas

Current impact analysis policy regarding "reasonably foreseeable development" of fluid mineral resources requires that a minimum discovery must be assumed in "frontier" areas for the purpose of impact analysis. Therefore, the assumption is made that a minimum discovery would be made in the Resource Area within the next 15 years.

In the next 15 years, there would be a 4 or 5-year period of increased exploration activity. This would be similar to the late 1970's and early 1980's when there was an increase in geophysical exploration in the Resource Area. During the next 15 years, 30 geophysical exploration permits will be approved and five wildcat wells would be drilled. This exploration would result in one discovery well.

Surface disturbance associated with the geophysical exploration permits would be minimal because it is Resource Area policy to require that seismic exploration be conducted along existing roads and trails. Each wildcat well would involve 2 acres of disturbance. Five access roads would be built for each of the wildcat wells. Each access road would be 16 feet wide by 1.5 miles long resulting in 3 acres of disturbance per road.

One of the five wildcat wells would result in a discovery. There would be a 5-acre area of disturbance associated with this producing well for the placement of associated production equipment. Production from this well would last for about 10 years beyond the 20-year life of this Plan. Table 2-4 summarizes projected oil and gas development over the next 15 years.

Geothermal

It is expected that production of geothermal resources for direct-use purposes would gradually increase over the next 15 years. The Las Cruces area is actively being promoted by the State of New Mexico, New Mexico State University (NMSU), and the City of Las Cruces as an ideal location for greenhouses. Among the attractions are known geothermal resources at Las Cruces and Radium Springs, the proximity to Interstate Highways 10 and 25, and a rapidly growing city.

There are currently three commercial greenhouses in the Resource Area: two in the Animas Valley and one at Radium Springs. The greenhouses in the Animas Valley are utilizing Federal geothermal resources and the greenhouse at Radium Springs is on private land. NMSU operates a geothermally heated greenhouse on private land which is used for research purposes.

It is expected that geothermal exploration would continue on a small scale in the Resource Area and that production operations would increase. Over the next 15 years, 10 temperature-gradient holes would be drilled. These drill sites would be located adjacent to existing roads. Each site would disturb an area 25 feet by 25 feet. Ten other various kinds of geophysical exploration permits (gravity, electrical resistivity, and radon for instance) would be approved. Most of these activities would be conducted along existing roads and trails and would involve minimal surface disturbance.

Four test wells would be drilled. Each test well would disturb an area of 1 acre and require an access road 1.5 miles long by 16 feet wide. All four test wells would be capable of production. There will be three commercial greenhouse facilities utilizing three of the four production wells. Each facility would require an area of 10 acres for development. Waste water would either be reinjected or pumped into evaporation pits. Table 2-5 summarizes geothermal development over the next 15 years.

TABLE 2-2
OIL AND GAS AND GEOTHERMAL LEASES

	OIL AND GAS		GEOTHERMAL	
	No. Leases	Acres	No. Leases	Acres
Doña Ana	19	54,451	9	13,126
Grant	11	12,065	0	0
Hidalgo	29	41,980	1	2,501
Luna	13	17,485	0	0
TOTALS	72*	125,981	10	15,627

Source: BLM Files, 1990.

Note: * Actual lease total is 70 because there are two leases that overlap the Hidalgo/Luna County line.

TABLE 2-3
OIL AND GAS WILDCAT WELLS BY COUNTY

COUNTY	NO OF WELLS	NO OF SHOWS	WELLS ON FEDERAL MINERAL ESTATE
Doña Ana	18	3	10
Grant	8	0	1
Hidalgo	30	2	7
Luna	24	2	5
TOTAL	80	7	23

Source: BLM Files, 1990.

TABLE 2-4
15-YEAR PROJECTION FOR OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT

TYPE OF ACTIVITY	NO. OF ACTIONS	AREA DISTURBED	TOTAL ACRES DISTURBED
Geophysical Permits	30	Existing roads and trails	
Drilling	5	Drill pads 2 ac/pad	10
Access Roads	5	16′ x 1.5 mi. 3 ac/road	15
Production	1	5 ac/site	5
		TOTAL ACRES DISTURBED = 30	

Source: BLM Files, 1990.

TABLE 2-5
15-YEAR PROJECTION FOR GEOTHERMAL DEVELOPMENT

TYPE OF ACTIVITY	NO. OF ACTIONS	AREA DISTURBED	TOTAL ACRES DISTURBED
Geophysical Permits	10	Existing roads and trails	Minimal
Temperature-Gradient Holes	10	Drill pads 0.01 ac/pad	0.10
Test Wells	4	Drill pads 1 ac/ site	4
Access Roads	4	16′ x 1.5 mi 3 ac/ road	12
Production	3	10 ac/site	30
		TOTAL ACRES DISTURBED =	**46.1**

Source: BLM Files, 1990.

NONENERGY LEASABLE MINERALS

Currently, there are no potassium or sodium leases within the Resource Area. There are no existing lease stipulations that affect areas having potential for the occurrence of nonenergy leasable minerals.

Exploration for potassium and sodium require prospecting permits. The development and production of potassium and sodium requires a lease. In 1981, two potassium prospecting permits were issued to Earth Sciences, Inc. for exploration of alunite in the Steeple Rock area. No work was ever done on these permits. In 1985, three sodium prospecting permits were issued to the Ozark-Mahoning Company for exploration in the playas west of Lordsburg. The company drilled only one hole and did not perform any other exploration. There has been no other exploration for nonenergy leasable minerals in the Resource Area. Although there may be some exploration for potassium or sodium within the next 15 years, no development or production is anticipated.

Locatables

The Mining Law of 1872 allows for the location of mining claims on public land for the purpose of exploration, development, and production of minerals. Locatable commodities include metallic minerals such as gold, silver, lead, zinc, and copper and nonmetallic minerals such as barite and fluorspar.

Before commencing any surface-disturbing mining activities, an operator is required to submit either a "notice" that describes the proposed activities or a more comprehensive "plan of operation" to the BLM. A notice is required for disturbing 5 acres or less or for driving off-road in an area designated as limited to existing roads and trails. A plan of operation is required for disturbing more than 5 acres or for operating within Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), ACECs, or areas designated as closed to off-road vehicle use.

The BLM must prepare an environmental assessment (EA) for a plan of operations. An EA is not required for a notice and the BLM has no authority to approve notices. However, it is standard practice in the Mimbres Resource Area to review all notices for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance and to advise the operator of any special environmental concerns and reclamation practices. Operators are not required to provide reclamation bonds for notices unless they have established a record of noncompliance. Reclamation bonds are mandatory for plans of operation.

OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Exploration activities are common in the Resource Area. Occasionally, there are small-scale development and production operations. Exploration operations that involve minimal or no surface disturbance include various types of geophysical surveys. The most common types of surface-disturbing exploration activities in the Resource Area are trenching and drilling. Trenches are dug with a backhoe and are typically 10 to 50 feet long, 4 feet wide, and 4 to 6 feet deep. Drilling operations are conducted with a truck-mounted rig. Normally, drill sites do not have to be cleared or leveled but there is surface disturbance resulting from the drilling operation and associated vehicle movement. The area disturbed is typically 50 feet by 50 feet. The depths of the holes are usually less than 1,000 feet. There are so many old mining roads in the Resource Area that, in many cases, new access roads for exploration are not needed. When roads are needed they are typically about 0.25 miles long and about 12 feet wide. These kinds of roads do not require a built-up surface.

In addition to the actual mine site, development and production operations usually require areas to be cleared and leveled for various kinds of equipment and buildings. Five to ten acres are usually needed for small mining operations. Access roads are built to accommodate heavy truck traffic and are commonly 16 feet wide.

15-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTION

Exploration, rather than development and production, will continue to be the primary locatable mineral activity in the Resource Area. Assuming that mineral commodity prices remain at or near present rates, it is expected that exploration activities will continue at current levels over the next 15 years. It is anticipated that the Resource Area will receive 300 notices, 5 plans of operation in WSAs, and 15 plans of operation for areas greater than 5 acres. Projected development and associated surface disturbance are shown in Table 2-6.

Salables

Salable minerals include materials such as sand, gravel, clay, caliche, stone, and volcanic cinders. These "mineral materials" must be purchased from the BLM. Most materials are sold by the cubic yard. Stone is usually sold by the ton. Some organizations and government agencies qualify for "free use" and are not charged for extracting mineral materials from public land.

Most applications for mineral material sales and free use must go through the NEPA review process. The exceptions are sales and free use from community pits and common use areas. These sites have already been evaluated through NEPA review and have been designated suitable for extraction of mineral materials. Permits for community pits and common-use areas are sold "over the counter" and do not require individual EAs. Sales from community pits and common use areas will continue (except for Community Pit No. 1 under Alternative B). See Table 2-7.

15-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTION

The need for mineral materials will be greatest in Doña Ana County. Most of the expected 200 or more sales and free use permits per year will be in this area. The Las Cruces-El Paso area is a rapidly growing portion of the "sunbelt" and is expected to grow at a much higher rate than many other parts of the country. Mineral materials will be used in support of this growth. The primary materials produced will be sand and gravel because they are needed for the production of concrete and asphaltic paving mixtures.

There will be an increasing demand for gravel and rock that meets specifications for use as an aggregate in concrete and asphaltic mixtures. Sand and gravel operators in the Las Cruces area say that high-quality gravel which meets these specifications is being rapidly depleted from existing sources. This is complicated by the fact that potential extraction of new sources of sand and gravel on the Las Cruces East Mesa is being physically inhibited by urban growth. There are also concerns about the degradation of air quality due to dust emissions from sand and gravel operations. Consequently, more distant sources of sand and gravel will eventually be mined. Also, operators will probably be producing aggregate from rock sources that may be 15 to 30 miles from Las Cruces.

There will be a continuing demand for stone from Community Pit No. 1. An average of 110 permits will be issued annually for stone (except under Alternative B).

TABLE 2-6
15-YEAR PROJECTION FOR LOCATABLE MINERALS DEVELOPMENT

TYPE OF ACTIVITY	NO. OF ACTIONS	AREA DISTURBED	TOTAL ACRES DISTURBED
NOTICES	300		
Geophysical Surveys	75	Existing roads	Minimal
Trenches/Open Cuts	500	0.003 ac/site	1.5
Drill Sites	150	0.05 ac/site	7.5
Access Roads	10 mi	1.45 ac/mile	14.5
		SUBTOTAL	**23.5**
PLANS (WSAs)	5		
Drill Sites	10	0.5 ac/site	5.0
		SUBTOTAL	**5.0**
PLANS (>5 acres)	15		
Trenches/Open Cuts	150	0.003 ac/site	0.45
Drill Sites	120	0.05 ac/site	6
Access roads	25 mi	1.45 ac/mi	36
Production Sites (mine/mill)	4	10 ac/site	40
		SUBTOTAL	**82.45**
		TOTAL ACRES DISTURBED	**110.95**

Source: BLM Files, 1990.

TABLE 2-7
COMMUNITY PITS/COMMON-USE AREAS

COMMUNITY PIT/COMMON USE AREA	COMMODITY	LOCATION
NO. 1	Stone/sand and gravel	T. 22 S., R. 1 E. Sec. 19
NO. 2	Sand and gravel	T. 19 S., R. 3 W. Sec. 17, 18
NO. 5	Caliche	T. 23 S., R. 1 E. Sec. 19
NO. 8[a]/	Sand and gravel	T. 25 S., R. 2 E. Sec. 34
NO. 9	Crusher fines	T. 25 S., R. 3 E. Sec. 28
NO. 10[b]/	Sand and gravel	T. 22 S., R. 2 E. Sec. 28
NO. 11	Volcanic cinders and stone	T. 25 S., R. 1 E. Sec. 24
JORNADA[c]/	**FILL DIRT**	**T. 22 S., R. 2 E. Sec. 10**
RINCON[c]/	**BUILDING STONE**	**T. 19 S., R. 3 W. Sec. 4**
O'HARA ROAD NORTH[c]/	**SAND AND GRAVEL**	**T. 26 S., R. 4 E. Sec. 19**
O'HARA ROAD CALICHE[c]/	**CALICHE**	**T. 26 S., R. 4 E. Sec. 26**
LA UNION[c]/	**SAND AND GRAVEL RED DIRT CALICHE**	**T. 27 S., R. 3 E. Sec. 13**

Source: BLM Files, 1990.

Notes: a/ Community Pit No. 8 was closed in September 1988.
b/ Community Pit No. 10 was closed in May 1986.
c/ **COMMON-USE AREA.**

LANDS

It is BLM policy to make public land and its resources available for use and development to meet National, regional, and local needs, consistent with National objectives. The Mimbres Resource Area has an active lands and realty program as a result of intense local and regional demands. See Appendix B-1 for Lands and Minerals Disposal Policy.

FLPMA (Public Law 94-579) provides authority for land ownership adjustments by sale, exchange, withdrawal and other means. The Act further requires that adjustments be in conformance with existing land-use plans.

Specific items to be examined while considering the merits of any disposal or acquisition action include:

1. Consistency and conformance with current planning.
2. Relative values.
3. Public Interest.
4. Willingness to sell or exchange on part of the landowner.
5. Prime and unique farmlands.
6. Floodplain/flood hazard evaluation.
7. Cultural and paleontological resource values.
8. Native American religious values.
9. Visual resources.
10. Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.
11. Wetlands and riparian areas.
12. Existing rights and uses.
13. Controversy.
14. Health and Safety.
15. Adjacent uses and ownership.
16. Air resources.
17. Special status species plants or animals and their habitat.
18. Mineral resources.
19. Recreation and wilderness values.

There are currently 14 Memorandums of Understanding and Cooperative Agreements in the Resource Area that address the lands program. These are listed on Appendix B-3.

Public Land Exchanges

Laws such as FLPMA and the Federal Land Exchange Facilitation Act provide specific authority for land exchanges.

The emphasis for the exchange program in the Mimbres Resource Area is to acquire private and State trust lands in areas that have high resource values or unique characteristics that would enhance management of the public land, and dispose of public land that is valuable for urban expansion or other physical characteristics that make them difficult or uneconomical for BLM to manage. Every effort will be made to avoid creating split-estate when exchanging land. Existing split-estate lands will be exchanged if they meet FLPMA disposal criteria.

Prior to filing a formal written proposal, an informal discussion of the exchange proposal is held with the non-Federal party. At this time, formal exchange proposals that are clearly not in the public interest are discouraged. Written proposals are reviewed to determine if the lands are covered by an approved RMP or MFP.

Exchange proponents in other BLM New Mexico Districts have selected public land in the Mimbres Resource Area and offered private land along the Black River, Wild and Scenic areas of the Rio Grande, and private mineral estate land within El Malpais National Conservation and National Monument. In an exchange agreement with The Nature Conservancy, there is a "pool" of lands that can come from any district in the State. The exchange program in the Mimbres Resource Area actively uses the pool by contributing land to the pool for use by other districts and making selections from the pool to accomplish the majority of exchanges in the Resource Area.

Sales of Public Land

The objective is to provide for the orderly disposition, at not less than fair market value, of public land identified for sale as part of the land-use planning process. Under FLPMA, BLM is authorized to sell public land where, as a result of land use planning, it is determined that the sale of such tracts meets the following disposal criteria:

1. Such tract, because of its location or other characteristics is difficult and uneconomic to manage as part of the public land and is not suitable for management by another Federal department or agency; or

2. Such tract was acquired for a specific purpose and the tract is no longer required for that or any other Federal purpose; or

3. Disposal of such tract will serve important public objectives, including but not limited to, expansion of communities and economic development, which cannot be achieved prudently or feasibly on land other than public land and which outweigh other public objectives and values, including, but not limited to, recreation and scenic values, which would be served by maintaining such tract in Federal ownership.

Every effort will be made to avoid creating split-estate when selling or exchanging lands. Existing split-estate land will be sold or exchanged if they meet FLPMA disposal criteria.

Public inquiries concerning the sale of public land in the Mimbres Resource Area are frequent, with the majority of requests coming from the Doña Ana County area. Most requests are from private landowners wanting to purchase public land adjacent to their deeded land. Several specific land sale proposals were received during the scoping phase for this Plan. These proposals have been individually evaluated and where deemed to merit further consideration, identified under the appropriate alternative. If not identified under one of the alternatives, it was determined that these proposals did not meet either the sale criteria or the management objectives for that particular alternative.

The Las Cruces District maintains a mailing list of individuals, businesses, and other organizations interested in purchasing public land. These individuals are notified when BLM conducts a sale of public land. Sales of public land, identified as suitable for disposal in an approved land-use plan are administered on a case-by-case basis. All sale actions are examined through the NEPA process and are subject to public participation and review.

Due to the current funding and priorities within the BLM as a whole, and specifically the Las Cruces District Office, sales of public land are a lower priority than exchanges.

Land Withdrawal

BLM policy is to keep the public land open for public use and enjoyment. However, there are conditions which may warrant the removal or withdrawal of certain public land from multiple use such as public safety or protection of special uses and resources.

Withdrawals designate public land for a particular project, purpose, or use. They may transfer jurisdiction to another Federal agency. Normally, they will close the land to entry under all or some of the public land laws including the mining laws.

All withdrawals in the Mimbres Resource Area have been, or will be reviewed, according to the requirements of laws and existing guidance (see Table 2-8). Withdrawals will be continued, modified, revoked, or terminated consistent with the need as rejustified by the withdrawing agency. As withdrawals are revoked or terminated, the land use decisions in the RMP will apply to those areas. For withdrawals where BLM presently has management responsibility, all RMP decisions covering those areas apply.

Lands suitable for restricted management such as water power and reservoir sites are reviewed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on a case-by-case basis as they are received. Use restrictions and protection of other resources or prohibitions may be negotiated through the FERC as a result of the case-by-case review.

Classifications were made under the authority of the Classification and Multiple Use Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 986). These classifications delineated land suitable for disposal consistent with the requirements of the Act or for retention for multiple-use management. The retention classifications segregated the land against entry under certain public land laws. Small areas with highly unique resource values were sometimes further segregated against entry under the mining laws or the mineral leasing laws.

All classifications and classification terminations will be reviewed as part of this planning effort (see Issue 2, ACECs and Other SMAs). This document deals with the questions of disposal and the segregations needed to accomplish these objectives. It also recommends the placement of further segregations against the mining laws or mineral leasing laws where they are needed to protect unique and valuable resources.

Table 2-9 shows existing classifications in the Mimbres Resource Area. The Doña Ana Recreation Area, Massacre Peak, Fort Cummings, and Granite Gap Recreation Area classifications will be terminated upon completion of this Plan. Others will remain in effect until replaced by a productive withdrawal.

TABLE 2-8
WITHDRAWALS

NUMBER	DATE	PURPOSE AND SURFACE MANAGER	ACRES[a/]
DOÑA ANA COUNTY			
EO*	October 17, 1903	Rio Grande Reservoir Site (BOR)	50
Proclamation 2137	May 27, 1907	Protection of US/Mexico Border (Unknown)	998
EO 1526 &	May 3, 1912	Jornada Experimental Station and Range (USDA)	176,899
EO 2368 &	April 24, 1916		28,813
EO 4266	July 20, 1925		7,957
SO*	November 16, 1926	Rio Grande Project (BOR)	98
EO 8646	January 11, 1941	San Andres Wildlife Refuge (USF&W)	57,215
PLO 883 &	May 21, 1952	White Sands Missile Range (COE/DOD)	506,540
PLO 1186	July 14, 1955		
PLO 663 &	August 28, 1950	Rio Grande Canalization Project (IBWC)	0.27
EO 8649 &	January 23, 1941		64
EO 8780 &	June 11, 1941		42
EO 9115 &	March 28, 1942		623
PLO 78 &	January 15, 1943		160
PLO 1866	June 11, 1941		120
PLO 2051	February 17, 1960	For Research Purposes (NMSU)	827
PLO 3462	November 23, 1964	For Water Supplies and Facilities to Benefit NASA/WSMR and Access Road (COE)	1,382
PLO 3685	June 10, 1965	For Research Facilities to Benefit NMSU (Antenna and Telecom "A" Mountain)(NASA)	2,789
PLO 4038	June 6, 1966	Ecology Plots & Demonstration Area (BLM)	40
PLO 4263	August 11, 1967	Animal Science Ranch (NMSU)	52,000
PL 101-578	**NOVEMBER 15, 1990**	**PREHISTORIC TRACKWAY STUDY**	**736**
LUNA COUNTY			
SO*	November 22, 1894	Public Spring Ft. Cummings (USDI)	320
EO 7442 &	August 31, 1936	Rifle Range (NM National Guard)	2,080
EO 5255	December 31, 1929		
PWR #107 (SO Intp. 250)	February 16, 1939	Public Water Reserves (USDI)	560
PLO 60	November 13, 1942	Landing Field (NM National Guard)	200
SO 238	July 17, 1947	Air Navigation Site (Civil Aeronautics Admin., Dept. of Commerce)	40
PLO 4038	June 6, 1966	Ecology Plots & Demonstration Area (BLM)	40

TABLE 2-8 (Concluded)
WITHDRAWALS

NUMBER	DATE	PURPOSE AND SURFACE MANAGER	ACRES[a/]
HIDALGO COUNTY			
PLO 4146	July 14, 1906	Protection of Mexican Duck (BLM)	190
PWR #107 (SO Intp. 250)	February 16, 1939	Public Water Reserves (USDI)	360
PWR #107 (SO Intp. 253)	August 19, 1940	Public Water Reserves (USDI)	40
PLO 4038 & PLO 4208	June 6, 1966 April 24, 1967	Ecological Plots & Demonstration Area (BLM)	40
GRANT COUNTY			
EO 477	July 14, 1906	Fort Bayard (COE/DOD)	860
EO 637	May 23, 1907	Fort Bayard Water Supply (COE/DOD)	13,622
EO 5889 & EO 551 & EO 759 & EO 83 & WPD #1	July 16, 1932 No Date November 24, 1924 July 2, 1910 August 7, 1916	San Carlos Indian Irrigation (San Carlos Indian Reservation) and Powersites on Gila River (FERC)	35,908
PWR #107 (SO Intp. 250)	February 16, 1939	Public Water Reserve (USDI)	40
PWR #107 (SO Intp. 256)	August 22, 1939	Public Water Reserves (USDI)	240
PLO 6613	**FEBRUARY 12, 1986**	**RED ROCK GAME FARM**	**712**

Source: BLM Files (State Office and District Office), 1990.

Notes:
a/ Acres have been rounded off.
b/ 104,221 acres of the Jornada withdrawal is within the WSMR withdrawal boundary.
PLO = Public Land Order
SO = Secretarial Order
EO = Executive Order
PWR = Public Water Reserves
WPD = Water Power Designation
*Some secretarial and executive orders issued in early 1900's and before were identified only by date, no number was assigned.

TABLE 2-9
EXISTING CLASSIFICATIONS IN THE MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

NAME	ACREAGE
Massacre Peak	240
Doña Ana Recreation Area	2,826
Granite Gap Recreation Area	960
Guadalupe Canyon	3,169
Organ Mountains Recreation Area	2,930
Baylor Recreation Area	838
Needle's Eye Picnic Site	960
Ft. Cummings Recreation Site	6,000

Source: BLM Files, 1990.

Desert Land Entries and Indian Allotments

ALL LANDS NOT IDENTIFIED FOR DISPOSAL IN THE RMP WILL BE RETAINED IN PUBLIC OWNERSHIP AND MANAGED FOR MULTIPLE USE. THEREFORE, NO APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR DISPOSAL UNDER THE DESERT LAND ACT.

Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PPs)

The R&PP Act provides guidelines and procedures for transfer of certain public land to States or their political subdivisions, and to nonprofit corporations and associations to meet their needs for public land required for historical, recreational and public purposes. Under the R&PP Act, BLM has the authority to lease or patent public land to governmental and nonprofit entities for public parks and building sites at less than fair market value. Applications for use of public land under the R&PP Act are processed as a Mimbres Resource Area priority. Such applications are processed under the requirements of NEPA and are subject to public review. R&PP applications for lands outside disposal areas that meet the criteria outlined in 43 CFR 2740 and are consistent with management objectives in this plan will be considered.

The BLM leases these public purpose areas to qualified applicants for $0.25 per acre per year or patents them for $2.50 per acre under the Special Pricing Program or at a 50 percent reduction for cemeteries and churches or a 10 percent reduction if use will be restricted to members of a particular limited group, such as fraternal and religious groups. These sale prices are determined in accordance with 43 USC 869-1(a) and (c). Leases or conveyances for recreational or historic monument purposes are issued without monetary consideration.

In the Mimbres Resource Area, 15 R&PP patents have been issued.

Currently, there are 31 authorized R&PP leases in the Mimbres Resource Area, totaling approximately 1,995 acres. Of these leases, 20 are for landfills which cover 17 sites. Previously 25 leases had been issued for landfills, however, the Goat Mountain (NM 42181), Silver City (NM 6762) and Luna County (NM 16869) landfills were terminated for nonuse and La Union and North Virden were replaced by new leases. Of the remaining 20, the Butterfield (NM 0559218), Chaparral (NM 11484), Salem-Garfield (NM 57123), Hatch (NM 16685), La Union (NM 31533), Mesilla Dam (NM 0253955), and Rincon (NM 9850) landfills have been closed to use by the public and are waiting final reclamation and development of closure policy before the leases are terminated.

The following leases accept solid waste at transfer stations: Anthony (NM 51351, NM 16686), Hill (NM 0253957), La Mesa (NM 030526), Garfield (NM 13178), Salem (NM 0253956), **AND VIRDEN NORTH (NM 57094).**

The City of Las Cruces landfill (NM 14, NM 18155) is the only remaining landfill on public land which continues to place solid waste in trenches. The only designated disposal area for liquid waste in Doña Ana County is the Mesquite landfill (NM 22012) located in the southern portion of the county.

Doña Ana County and the City of Las Cruces are conducting studies to select a location for a regional landfill. These studies will also designate a boundary for the region. The region can include more than one city and one county. Any public land that may be used for this regional landfill must meet disposal criteria and be considered suitable for use as a landfill.

Because of changes being made to the current R&PP regulations, no additional leases for landfills will be issued. Sales of public land for landfill purposes would not be accomplished under the new R&PP Act until the R&PP regulations are finalized. Sales of public land for landfill purposes could be accomplished under the public sale authority.

The total authorizations in Doña Ana County account for approximately 50 percent of the total R&PP leases/patents in the Las Cruces District 8-county area of jurisdiction. Since 1982, the receipt of R&PP lease applications has increased due to a greater public awareness of public land uses in Doña Ana County. The Mimbres Resource Area receives an average of four R&PP applications per year. Ninety-five percent of these requests are for locations within Doña Ana County.

Rights-of-Way, Leases, and Permits

The Mimbres Resource Area grants rights-of-way (ROWs), leases and permits to qualified individuals, businesses, and governmental entities for the use of public land. New ROWs are issued **WITHIN** existing ROWs whenever possible to promote joint use. All ROW actions are coordinated, to the fullest extent possible, with Federal, State, and local government agencies, adjacent landowners, and interested individuals and groups.

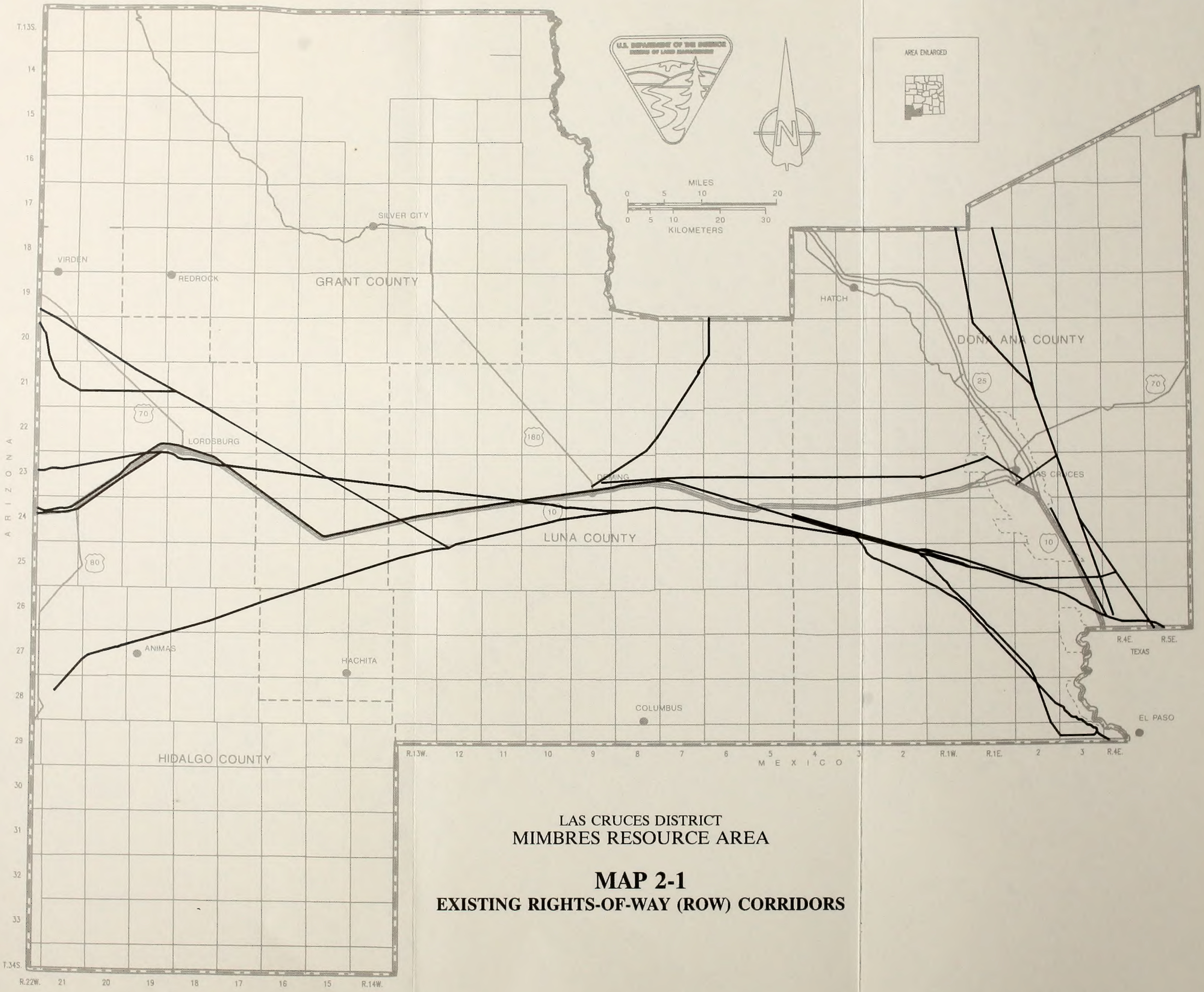
All ROW applications are analyzed site-specifically on a case-by-case basis. There are no programmatic EAs for the lands program. Each case is reviewed by an interdisciplinary team. All ROW activities are subject to site-specific environmental analysis. Natural and cultural values are protected or avoided. Mitigation measures are incorporated within the authorizations to minimize the adverse effects of any surface disturbing activity. Project construction areas are rehabilitated by various reseeding and soil erosion control methods using the Resource Area's Reclamation and Reseeding Guidelines for guidance.

All roads will be constructed or maintained in accordance with the BLM New Mexico Road Policy.

The Mimbres Resource Area processes an average of 50 ROWs per year, 90 percent within Doña Ana County.

Due to the densely populated Mesilla Valley and the City of Las Cruces, there are numerous pipelines, transmission and distribution powerlines, and highway ROWs in Doña Ana County. The larger ROWs are confined to well-established corridors. These corridors also extend west to Deming and Lordsburg. Applicants are encouraged to use existing corridors whenever possible. **THESE EXISTING CORRIDORS DO NOT HAVE A DESIGNATED WIDTH, UNLESS SPECIFIED IN THE MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS FOR THE ACECs IN APPENDIX H.** Prohibiting factors for width would be other resource conflicts, terrain, and land status. Most lands actions in the Resource Area are compatible, and overlapping ROWs are issued whenever possible. Numerous smaller ROWs (such as roads to private residences) are issued annually in addition to the larger ones mentioned above to accommodate public needs within the Resource Area. **(SEE MAP 2-1.)**

There are currently 49 grants issued for communication sites in the Mimbres Resource Area. Many of these ROW holders are authorized to sublease to other users. Site plans are being developed for the sites. The Resource Area's terrain offers a prime area for development of communication sites. The sites most in demand include the Little Floridas, Goat Mountain (Twin Peaks), Robledo Mountains, Victorio Mountain, "A" Mountain, and San Augustine Pass. Because of public demand for communication sites in the San Augustine Pass, the US Department of Army is concerned that frequencies, if not monitored properly, could conflict with their defense testing. In a meeting with the Mimbres Resource Area Manager and White Sands Missile Range (WSMR) personnel, it was agreed BLM will no longer address communication sites in the San Augustine Pass area so long as WSMR is willing to consider communication site applications for that area. Should WSMR cease considering applications from private parties, the BLM will resume management of the area in accordance with provisions of this Plan. All public inquiries will be transferred to WSMR for consideration. The "A" Mountain site is another management concern. NASA and


AREA ENLARGED
MILES
0 5 10 20
0 5 10 20 30
KILOMETERS
N
T.13S.
14
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T.34S.
R.22W. 21 20 19 18 17 16 15 R.14W.
R.13W. 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 R.1W. R.1E. 2 3 R.4E.
R.4E. R.5E.
ARIZONA
MEXICO
TEXAS
EL PASO
VIRDEN
REDROCK
SILVER CITY
GRANT COUNTY
LORDSBURG
DEMING
HATCH
LAS CRUCES
DONA ANA COUNTY
LUNA COUNTY
HIDALGO COUNTY
ANIMAS
HACHITA
COLUMBUS
70
180
10
80
25
10
70

LAS CRUCES DISTRICT
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

MAP 2-1
EXISTING RIGHTS-OF-WAY (ROW) CORRIDORS

NMSU want the site to remain closed to future applications because they are concerned further development at the site would interfere with NASA's mission and research being conducted at NMSU.

There are currently three 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 2920 permit authorizations in the Resource Area. The two in Doña Ana County include one for an **OFFICE FOR A SAND AND GRAVEL OPERATION** and the other is an apiary site. An apiary site permit is also authorized in Luna County near the Florida Mountains WSA. Approximately three permits for movies filmed in the Resource Area are processed each year.

It is assumed that management will continue to authorize these routine realty actions throughout the 20-year life of this RMP. These actions are likely to occur on a continuing basis no matter which alternative is ultimately selected and include the granting of routine ROWs, leases, permits, and R&PPs.

Set Asides

Certain parcels of public land, within the boundaries of the Elena Gallegos Exchange, were set aside (reserved) by Memoranda of Understanding with the City of Las Cruces and the Las Cruces School District No. 2 for **DISPOSAL AND** future development under the R&PP Act. Certain parcels were also set aside within the 10,000-acre State Land Exchange Area for existing and potential R&PP lease **AND/OR PATENT**. The legal descriptions of these areas are contained in Appendix B-3.

Hazardous Materials

The potential for the existence of hazardous materials at landfills (including septage pits and illegal dump sites) is a major concern in the Resource Area. Some landfills were improperly constructed and others were built without regard for geologic and hydrologic conditions. The primary concern is that hazardous substances could be leaking from the landfills and entering the groundwater.

To date, **NINE LANDFILLS** have been investigated according to Environmental Protection Agency guidelines for the presence of hazardous materials and potential contamination of the environment. Most of these sites were proven to contain insignificant amounts of hazardous materials and pose no threat to the public health or the environment. The Resource Area continues to study any site where evidence indicates hazardous materials may be present.

There are 17 landfill sites on public land in the Resource Area. Of the 17 sites, 15 are in Doña Ana County and two are in Hidalgo County. Currently, all except the Las Cruces landfill are physically closed to land-filling of solid waste although the leases are still current. Instead of land-filling, Doña Ana County has placed containerized transfer stations at the various landfill sites in the County. The Mesquite site in Doña Ana County is the only site that accepts septage. Waste is transferred from these stations to the Las Cruces landfill. Landfills are listed in Table 2-10.

Landfills (or any other site) will be investigated if suspected of containing hazardous materials or posing a potential threat to public safety. As unauthorized sites are found they will be **ASSESSED BY PERFORMING A "REMOVAL EVALUATION" AND** cleaned up **AS NECESSARY. IF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS CONTAMINATION CANNOT BE REMOVED,** a Preliminary Assessment (PA) may be performed. If the results from the PA indicate that hazardous materials **ARE SIGNIFICANT** or may have migrated off-site, further study **MIGHT BE NECESSARY** through a Site Investigation (SI) or a more comprehensive Expanded Site Investigation (ESI). Table 2-10 shows the status of landfill investigations as of February 1991. **ONCE EPA AND THE STATE ARE SATISFIED WITH THE INVESTIGATIONS UNDER CERCLA, THE LANDFILL WILL BE CLOSED FOLLOWING STATE REGULATIONS AND ANY RECOMMENDATIONS RESULTING FROM CERCLA INVESTIGATIONS.** All surface and mineral use authorizations are suspended pending the outcome of the studies. **ADDITIONALLY, THE SITES LISTED ON THE FEDERAL FACILITIES DOCKET MAY BE SEVERELY RESTRICTED FROM ANY OTHER LAND USE IN THE FUTURE. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT ONLY MAINTENANCE OF THE SITES AND**

MONITORING WILL BE ALLOWED AT THE DOCKET SITES.

ACCESS

The Mimbres Resource Area normally acquires one or two easements each year. As required by BLM policy, these easements generally provide legal access **FOR ONE OR MORE OF THESE RESOURCE NEEDS: LANDS, MINERALS, FORESTRY, RANGE, WILDLIFE, RECREATION, AND WATERSHED.**

On a case-by-case basis, easements are acquired to establish legal access where **ROAD OR TRAIL EASEMENTS ARE THE MOST FREQUENT TYPE OF ACQUISITION.** The method of determining needed access is in accordance with the **BLM** Planning Process. This process **WOULD BE** funded by the benefitting resource program(s), such as recreation, range, **OR** wildlife.

All roads will be constructed or maintained in accordance with the BLM New Mexico Road Policy.

LIVESTOCK GRAZING

Livestock grazing in the Resource Area is authorized under the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, FLPMA of 1976, and the Public Rangelands Improvement Act (PRIA) of 1978. BLM is directed to authorize and manage livestock grazing on public land under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield and to prevent the degradation of the rangeland resources by providing for their orderly use, improvement, and development.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973, the Archaeological Resource Protection Act of 1971, and NEPA of 1969 can affect livestock grazing activities by requiring additional resource management actions. Through the NEPA process, Federal agencies assess the impacts of their programs and actions on the human environment. BLM was **SUED** by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) in 1973 with noncompliance **WITH** the Act. **SETTLEMENT** resulted in 212 site-specific Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) being required by the **COURT TO BE PREPARED BY THE BLM ASSESSING THE IMPACTS OF** livestock grazing on public land. The two EISs encompassing the Mimbres Resource Area are the Southern Rio Grande EIS (BLM 1981) and the Las Cruces/Lordsburg Management Framework Plan Amendment/EIS (BLM 1984). These two EISs **AND ASSOCIATED MFPs** provide program guidance through the proposed actions and management objectives identified. Approximately 20 allotments located in New Mexico are administered by the Safford District (located in Safford, Arizona). These allotments were covered by the Upper Gila-San Simon Grazing EIS (**BLM** 1978).

Grazing Management Policy

BLM's Final Grazing Management Policy established in 1982 now incorporated in BLM handbooks identified goals and objectives consistent with BLM's responsibility to improve the rangelands and manage the grazing use on public land in compliance with laws and policies affecting the grazing management program. The intent of the policy is to make the grazing management program more efficient and cost effective by use of a selective management approach. This is accomplished by assigning management priorities among allotments or groups of allotments within a planning area based on similar resource characteristics, management needs, and both resource and economic potential for improvement. Selective management categories can be changed as additional resource **INFORMATION** becomes available.

The three management categories specified in the Policy are:

- Category M - those allotments with current satisfactory conditions;
- Category I - those allotments where existing conditions are unsatisfactory and can economically be improved; and
- Category C - those allotments where the opportunity for positive economic return on public investment is unlikely.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON ALLOTMENT CATEGORIZATION IS LOCATED IN APPENDIX C-1. A copy of the grazing management policy can

TABLE 2-10
LANDFILL INVESTIGATION STATUS

LANDFILL NAME	STATUS	LISTED ON FEDERAL FACILITY DOCKET
Anthony	SI completed	YES
Butterfield Park	PA scheduled	No
Chaparral	PA completed	YES
Garfield	RE	No
Hatch	PA completed	YES
Hill	PA completed	YES
La Mesa	PA completed	YES
La Union	ESI completed	YES
Las Cruces	SI completed	YES
Mesquite	PA completed	YES
Mesilla Dam	ESI completed	YES
Old La Union*	PA scheduled	No
Rincon	RE	No
Salem	RE	No
Salem-Garfield	RE	No
Virden North	PA scheduled	No
Virden South	RE	No

Source: BLM Files, 1991.

Notes: *This site has been formally closed by the BLM.
SI = Site Investigation
PA = Preliminary Assessment
ESI = Expanded Site Investigation
RE = REMOVAL EVALUATION

be found at the Mimbres Resource Area Office. All allotments within the Mimbres Resource Area have been categorized according to the criteria contained in the grazing management policy (**SEE APPENDIX C-1**). The present allotment categorizes, including a summary of each allotment in the Mimbres Resource Area, is displayed in Appendix C-2.

SOUTHERN RIO GRANDE GRAZING EIS

There are 74 grazing allotments within the Southern Rio Grande EIS area. All of these but one are within the grazing district boundary. All of Doña Ana County and the eastern edge of Luna County are included in this EIS area. In the Rangeland Program Summary (RPS) of January 1983, allotments in this EIS area were categorized and decisions issued, placing these allotments into one of the three management categories. Category I allotments were given a high, medium, and low priority rating depending on the resource conflicts, utilization patterns, and needed rangeland improvements. Initially there were 49 Category I, 12 Category M, and 13 Category C allotments. As of the preparation of this document, there are 33 Category I, 21 Category M, and 20 Category C allotments (see Appendix C-2). Allotments have changed category due to changing priorities, resolution or identification of resource conflicts, changing utilizations patterns, and implementation of activity plans which have incorporated needed rangeland improvements. Of the Category I allotments, 19 have completed the initial 5-year monitoring period and are now in the activity plan development stage.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative in the **SOUTHERN RIO GRANDE** EIS, 16 wells (with pump or windmill), 7 storage tanks, 58 drinking troughs, 85.5 miles of pipeline, 7 dirt tanks, 161 miles of fence, 7 cattleguards, 9 dikes, 3,960 acres of creosotebush brush control and 21,238 acres of mesquite brush control were identified. According to the RPS updates issued each year, a total of 2 wells (with pump or windmill), 5 storage tanks, 14 drinking troughs, 40.5 miles of pipeline, and 70.6 miles of fence have been constructed, and 4,853 acres of creosotebush treated. These projects were completed with 8100 funding, where BLM and the permittee share the cost or under a **RANGE IMPROVEMENT** Permit, where the permittee pays for the entire project.

There are **NINE** Allotment Management Plans (AMPs) in existence in this EIS area. One of these plans has been evaluated and will be revised. Two others are being intensively monitored to determine how the plan should be revised. Several new activity plans are in the initial stages of development. Most Category I allotments will have an activity plan developed on the allotment **AS THE MONITORING STUDIES AND ALLOTMENT EVALUATIONS ARE COMPLETED**.

Since the completion of the Southern Rio Grande EIS, all Category I allotments have **HAD SOME MONITORING** or are being monitored at this time. The Category M and C allotments, although less intensively monitored, have had some form of use supervision done on them either in the way of rangeland improvement inspections, livestock counts, or utilization monitoring. Of the 19 I Category allotments with 5 years of monitoring completed, 8 are in the activity planning stage and have received or soon will receive the needed rangeland improvements to implement the grazing systems. Permittees on 11 allotments have accepted adjustments or remained at their preference numbers, and an activity plan is not proposed at this time. Improvement in range condition on the monitored allotments appears to be **THE RESULT OF A COMBINATION OF SEVERAL FACTORS. ABOVE AVERAGE RAINFALL AND ROTATIONAL GRAZING HAVE HAD A MAJOR EFFECT ALONG WITH REDUCTION IN ACTIVE LIVESTOCK USE IN THE LATE 1970's AND EARLY 1980's.** Species composition has remained the same over the 9 years that studies have been conducted. The brush control areas have shown the greatest improvement in range condition.

In the Afton Allotment (No. 03056), a series of small exclosures (100 acres total) will be constructed to provide ungrazed research sites.

LAS CRUCES/LORDSBURG MFP AMENDMENT/EIS (MFPA/EIS)

There are 273 grazing allotments within the Las Cruces/Lordsburg MFPA/EIS area. Of this total, 133 are within the grazing district boundary and the remaining 140 are outside this boundary. All of Grant and Hidalgo counties and the western three quarters of Luna County are included in this EIS area. A small portion of Cochise County in Arizona is administered for grazing in the Mimbres Resource Area. Allotments in this EIS area were categorized and decisions issued, placing these allotments into one of three management categories.

Category I allotments were given a high, medium and low priority rating depending on the resource conflicts, utilization patterns, and needed rangeland improvements. Initially, there were 92 Category I, 164 Category M, and 17 Category C allotments. As of the preparation of this document, there are 84 Category I, 170 Category M, and 19 Category C allotments (see Appendix C-2). Allotments have changed category due to changing priorities, resolution or identification of resource conflicts, changing utilization patterns, and implementation of activity plans which have incorporated needed rangeland improvements. Of the Category I allotments, **28** have completed the initial 5-year monitoring period and are now in the activity plan development stage.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative in the Las Cruces/Lordsburg MFPA/EIS, 11 wells (with pump or windmill), 17 storage tanks, 47 drinking troughs, 67 miles of pipeline, 25 dirt tanks, 55 miles of fence, 1 cattleguard, 68 erosion dikes, 4 umbrella catchments, 42,279 acres of creosotebush brush control and 9,609 acres of mesquite brush control were identified. According to the RPS updates issued each year, a total of 3 wells (with pump or windmill), 16 storage tanks, 25 drinking troughs, 74.4 miles of pipeline, and 155.6 miles of fence have been constructed and 5,491 acres of creosotebush have been treated with an additional 320 acres treated through prescribed burns. These projects were completed with 8100 funding, where BLM and the permittee share the cost or under a **RANGE IMPROVEMENT** Permit, where the permittee pays for the entire project.

There are **18** AMPs in existence in this EIS area. One of these plans has been evaluated and revised. Two others are being intensively monitored to determine how the plan should be revised. Several new activity plans are in the initial stages of development. **MOST** Category I allotments will have activity plans developed on the allotment as monitoring studies **AND ALLOTMENT EVALUATION** are completed.

Since the completion of the Las Cruces/Lordsburg MFPA/EIS, all Category I allotments have been monitored, are being monitored, or are on the schedule to be initiated in the next 5 years. The Category M or C allotments, although less intensively monitored, have had some form of use supervision done on them either in the way of rangeland improvement inspections, livestock counts, or utilization monitoring. Of the 16 I Category allotments, with 5 years of monitoring completed, 13 are in the activity planning stage and have received or soon will receive the needed rangeland improvements to implement the grazing systems. Permittees on three allotments have accepted adjustments or remained at their preference numbers, and an activity plan is not proposed at this time. Improvement in range condition on the monitored allotments appears to be **THE RESULT OF A COMBINATION OF FACTORS.** Above average rainfall and rotational grazing has had a major effect along with reductions in active livestock use in the late 1970's and early 1980's. Species composition has remained the same over the 7 years that the studies have been conducted. The brush control areas have shown the greatest improvement in range condition.

Livestock Grazing Management

The objective of the Mimbres Resource Area rangeland management program is to manage the rangelands in an efficient manner by providing effective **ALLOTMENT** management. This can be accomplished through careful planning, giving attention to proper placement of rangeland improvements, distribution of salt, distribution of livestock, **THE** kind and class of livestock, suitable grazing systems, **ASSESSING** plant and animal requirements, and vegetation treatments.

ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT PLANS/ACTIVITY PLANS

THESE RMPs AND OTHER ACTIVITY PLANS will continue to be developed for allotments to resolve resource problems or conflicts. Specific management actions will be developed at the activity plan stage. These plans will be prepared in consultation, cooperation, and coordination with the permittees, **OTHER LANDOWNERS,** and **AFFECTED INTERESTS.** The priorities for completing AMPs and activity plans will **BE DETERMINED BY THE ALLOTMENT CATEGORY**; for example, Category I allotments will be first priority, followed by Category "M" and "C" allotments.

GRAZING SYSTEMS

THESE AMPs AND OTHER ACTIVITY PLANS will normally include a grazing system which will provide periodic rest from livestock grazing. The type of system to be implemented will be tailored to meet the needs of the allotment and will be developed through consultation with the livestock operator and other affected interests. Consideration will be given to permittee needs, level of management, vegetation objectives, the degree and type of resource conflicts, initial costs to implement the system, such as fences and waters, and other factors. A variety of grazing systems are available for consideration. Some of these are rest-rotation, deferred, deferred-rotation, rotation, and high intensity/short duration **GRAZING.**

It is anticipated that five new activity plans will be developed and implemented each year upon the completion of the monitoring studies on the I Category allotments. Allotments with Special Management Areas or riparian zones, would receive a higher priority due to possible resource conflicts.

RANGELAND IMPROVEMENTS

THE PRIA outlines the BLM's goal for investing in economically and environmentally sound rangeland improvements to improve public land for multiple use purposes. **COPIES** of the **LAW AND RESULTING REGULATIONS ARE** located in the Mimbres Resource Area Office.

A benefit/cost analysis will be used to help set improvement priorities on all new rangeland improvements. Rangeland improvements and vegetation treatments will continue to be implemented to improve or maintain forage production and range condition. Project implementation and the cost of these actions were based on several assumptions:

- Manpower and funding availability.
- Demand for products (i.e., beef) will continue.
- Objectives will be reached within 20 years of plan implementation.
- Actual implementation of the proposed developments may vary from those described at the planning stage.

During the preparation of the AMPs and activity plans, proposed developments will be further refined to reflect changes in allotment management and needs, along with the ever changing legislation, mandates, and policy.

LIVESTOCK USE ADJUSTMENTS

On an allotment, adjustments can be made by changing one or more of the following: the kind and class of livestock, the season of use, the number of livestock, or the pattern of grazing use. Any such adjustment is made only after the appropriate consultation, cooperation, and coordination with lessees, permittees, other landowners, District Grazing Advisory Board, and other affected interests as required by laws, regulations, and policy. Long-term increases in vegetation will be reserved for wildlife, watershed, and livestock on a case-by-case basis.

Permittees may apply for and be granted nonuse for definite periods of time based upon the following criteria: conservation and protection of the public land, annual fluctuations of livestock operations, financial or other reasons beyond the control of the operator, **OR** livestock disease or quarantine. Such nonuse must be in accordance with the goals of the RMP, benefit or protect sensitive resource values (such as within an ACEC), and be approved by the Authorized Officer. Other applications for livestock use will not be considered while the **APPROVED** nonuse is in effect.

MONITORING STUDIES

The monitoring of rangeland resources involves collection of data on the present grazing management system, the effectiveness of existing rangeland improvements, and present stocking rate, taking into consideration current precipitation data, livestock use **LEVELS**, watershed and wildlife habitat needs, and **CURRENT** condition and trend. The studies help identify livestock distribution problems, needed rangeland improvements, vegetation treatments, initial **ADJUSTED** stocking rates, and possible grazing management systems tailored for the particular allotment and its needs. **THE RANGELAND MONITORING STUDIES ARE USED IN THE MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA TO MONITOR LONG-TERM RANGELAND ECOLOGICAL CONDITION AND TREND AND DETERMINE DESIRED PLANT COMMUNITY GOALS.**

Monitoring studies have been or will be established on **ALL** Category I allotments in the Mimbres Resource Area. The intensity and frequency of the **STUDIES** depends on the allotment category. Category I allotments are monitored at a greater intensity than Category M and C allotments. Any necessary adjustments in stocking levels or other management practices will be based on these studies and consultation with the permittee, **OTHER LANDOWNERS, AND AFFECTED INTERESTS. THERE WILL BE NO CHANGES IN ACTIVE GRAZING PREFERENCE** until monitoring studies indicate a change is necessary **OR AS AGREED UPON WITH THE OPERATOR OR AS PROVIDED FOR IN THE GRAZING REGULATIONS.**

VEGETATION

Timbered or woodland areas are extremely limited in the Mimbres Resource Area. Vegetation sales for fuelwood or fenceposts will continue to be handled on a case-by-case basis. There will be no fuelwood sales except to accomplish other resource management objectives such as mesquite eradication **OR JUNIPER THINNING.** Vegetation products for landscaping and decorative purposes are a major demand in the Resource Area.

Prickly pear, sotol, ocotillo, desert willow, little-leaf sumac, range ratany, soaptree yucca, and Spanish dagger are some of the plants sold for noncommercial purposes in the Resource Area. There are no commercial sale areas. Plant collecting is illegal without a permit **(WITH THE EXCEPTION OF SMALL QUANTITIES FOR RECREATIONAL USE IN ACCORDANCE WITH 43 CFR 8365.1-5)**. Illegal plant collecting is a recurring problem throughout the Resource Area. Currently, there are five vegetation sale areas encompassing approximately 22,000 acres in Doña Ana County. Most of this acreage is in the soaptree yucca sale area. As the demand continues to grow, new areas will be identified. It is estimated that not more than two new sale areas per year would be opened and these would not entail more than 100 acres each. The sotol sale area will need to be moved periodically. The use of sotol in religious ceremonies requires the removal of the center of the plant which kills it. Prior to surface disturbing activities, such as sand and gravel operations, plants would be made available to the public and commercial operators. The Adopt-A-Plant program is in its initial stage of development. Under this program, **NATIVE** plants **DISPLACED** as a result of surface disturbing actions will be "adopted" into private homes. Removal of vegetation products would involve some plant digging and some off-road vehicle travel.

SOIL, AIR, AND WATER

Soils

The BLM has cooperated with the USDA Soil Conservation Service in the National Cooperative Soil Survey Program. Participation in the National Cooperative Soil Survey Program will continue. Updating of the soil surveys and soil interpretive data will be used in planning, support, and implementation of resource activities.

Emphasis is placed on prevention of deterioration or degradation as well as conservation of the soil resource. Some protection is provided by the Conservation Reserve Program. All lands in soil capability classes II through VIII are not suitable for desert land entry petition application or agricultural leases. This program seeks to remove highly erodible lands from marginal agricultural operations.

Air

Reduction of air quality impacts from activities on public land is accomplished by mitigation measures developed on a case-by-case basis through NEPA or other statutory or regulatory processes. Each impact is evaluated to see if it is allowable and acceptable. Activities such as road construction and sand or gravel extraction will have appropriate measures developed to mitigate impacts to air quality (such as dust abatement). These measures will be made a part of the permit or contract.

The BLM is required to comply with the New Mexico State Implementation Plan on air quality as well as meet responsibilities under the Clean Air Act, as amended, and FLPMA.

Water Resources

Policy and guidance for the management of water resources associated with land administered by the BLM is summarized in various BLM manual sections. A brief description of the different authorities for the program is also presented. General program emphasis is on water rights and watershed management specifically related to water quality and sediment yields.

WATER RIGHTS

A water use and water rights inventory has been completed in the Mimbres Resource Area to identify the status of the BLM's water rights filings. There are no ongoing adjudications in the Resource Area.

All water rights are acquired in accordance with State substantive and procedural law except where Congress or the Executive Branch has created a Federal reservation of a water right.

Federal reserved water rights are defined in legislation and Executive Orders. BLM's Federal reserved water rights claims are primarily associated with the withdrawal established by the Executive Order of April 17, 1926 which concerns public water reserves.

WATER QUALITY

Water quality regulation in the United States receives its basic authority from three laws. The Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972 and the Clean Water Act of 1977 as amended are the basic authorities for instream water quality standards and maximum permissible pollutant discharges. The Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 is the basic authority for domestic water quality standards.

A growing concern is nonpoint source pollution. The New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission recently identified the main stem of the Rio Grande from Doña Ana south as having high amounts of pathogens, while the Mimbres River from Mimbres to San Juan and the Gila River from Davis Creek to the State line are impaired from extensive siltation, nutrients, and temperature. The BLM will continue to participate with the State and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in water quality management to ensure that management practices comply with State water quality standards.

The Colorado River Salinity Control Act passed in 1974 directed the Secretary of the Interior to undertake research and development of salinity control projects and to develop methods to improve water quality. An amendment to the Act passed in 1984 specifically requires the BLM to develop a comprehensive program for minimizing salt contributions to the Colorado River from BLM-administered public land.

WATERSHED ACTIVITY PLANS

THERE IS CURRENTLY ONE WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE CLARK DRAW WATERSHED ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE COOKE'S RANGE. OTHER ACTIVITY PLANS SUCH AS THE PLACITA ARROYO COORDINATED MANAGEMENT PLAN (CMP), SAN SIMON CMP, AND GILA LOWER BOX COORDINATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN ALSO ADDRESS WATERSHED AND RIPARIAN MANAGEMENT CONCERNS.

Control of soil erosion, sediment movement, and salt contamination of surface water remains a high priority management goal. Nonpoint source impaired watersheds and areas with critical to severe erosion (1.0 to greater than 3.0 acre ft/mi^2/yr) sediment yields, which produce runoff having more than 1,000 milligrams per liter (mg/1) dissolved salts, will be of major focus. Salinity control will be a priority on saline soils within the Colorado River drainage.

Continuing efforts to control erosion will include the following: minimizing surface disturbance from construction projects, closure and rehabilitation of unneeded roads, and control of off-road vehicle use in critical areas.

The soil and water programs will continue to emphasize legislative mandates of protection, as they relate to surface and groundwater quality, as well as provide support to other resource activities in the Mimbres Resource Area.

Project level planning will consider the sensitivity of the watershed (soil, water, and vegetation) resource in the affected area on a site-specific basis. All surface disturbing actions will require appropriate reclamation measures using the Resource Area's Reclamation and Reseeding Guidelines as guidance. All rangeland improvements and land treatments will be designed to minimize adverse impacts to the watershed resource. Project construction areas will be reseeded with a mixture of grasses, forbs, and shrubs as necessary. These projects consist of contour furrowing and pitting, mechanical treatments, and the construction of detention dams, diversions, water spreader, wire checks, and exclosures.

FIRE MANAGEMENT

The number and size of fires varies from year-to-year, depending on the occurrence of lightning storms and the amount of fine fuels build-up. Between 1977 and 1989, there were 63 fires on land administered by the Mimbres Resource Area. During those years, annual ignitions ranged from a low of 0 in 1986 to 10 ignitions in 1989. During this period, 46 of the fires were caused by lightning with sizes ranging from 1 acre to 3,000 acres. There were 17 man caused fires. Fuels consumed were primarily grass, pinyon/juniper, mixed brush, and creosotebush. For more details on fuel types, refer to the maps and fuel models in the District Fire Management Activity Plan.

The current Mimbres Resource Area policy is to initial attack all wildfires on or threatening public land. Suppression strategies mainly focus on minimizing cost not the acreage burned. In high sensitivity areas such as the Organ Mountains or where significant property values exist, suppression strategies may be geared towards minimizing burned acreage while protecting important resource values.

Prescribed burning is another management tool that the Resource Area has only recently begun to utilize. It is estimated that one to two prescribed burns would be conducted each year totalling several hundred to several thousand acres. These would be mainly in alkali sacaton, tobosa, or mountain shrub vegetation types.

WILDLIFE

Legislation such as FLPMA, the Sikes Act, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended in 1982, and the PRIA, as amended, has directed the BLM to improve management of wildlife habitat to meet wildlife needs. PRIA outlines the BLM's goal for investing in economically and environmentally sound rangeland improvements to improve public land for multiple use purposes. The Wildlife 2000 initiative places added emphasis on expanding and creating a more effective wildlife program Bureauwide. New Mexico Fish and Wildlife 2000 and the New Mexico Operations Plan for wildlife are companion policy guides. This often conflicts with increasing demands for basic energy supplies, building materials, and food products. It is the responsibility of the Mimbres Resource Area to identify opportunities to maintain, improve, and expand wildlife habitat on the public land for both consumptive and nonconsumptive uses as well as biological diversity. The RMP process also involves identification of wildlife habitats deserving special attention. Furthermore, it is USDI policy that Interior agency fish and wildlife management strategies assist State agencies in implementing fish and wildlife resource plans.

CONTINUING MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE

All actions in the Mimbres Resource Area are reviewed **IN AN INTERDISCIPLINARY** site-specific analysis during the EA process to determine whether the action will affect wetland or riparian areas. Also considered are impacts to resident species' habitat, habitat improvement projects, and compatibility with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) and BLM Comprehensive Wildlife Plan. All rangeland and watershed improvements will continue to be designed to achieve both range and wildlife objectives. This includes location and design of waters and vegetation manipulation projects. Fences are designed to minimize resistance to wildlife movement.

Animal Damage Control

Animal damage control activities on public land in the Mimbres Resource Area are guided by USDI policy and the annual Animal Damage Control Plan for the Las Cruces District, prepared jointly by the USDA and the BLM. The USDA has the responsibility for the program and supervises all control activities. The BLM approves all specific control actions on public land.

Habitat Management

Habitat management plans (HMPs) and portions of Coordinated Resource Management Plans are developed in an effort to improve wildlife habitat. Implementation and maintenance of existing HMPs (Florida Mountains, Big Hatchet/Alamo Hueco Mountains, Peloncillo Mountains, San Simon Cienega, Gila Lower Box, and Franklin Mountains) and Coordinated Resource Management Plans (Gila Lower Box and Organ Mountains) will continue utilizing appropriated funds as well as funds to be derived from the soon to be expanded Sikes Act Stamp Program. Existing HMPs are on file and available for review at the Mimbres Resource Area Office.

Monitoring of wildlife habitat by key species utilization will continue to be conducted as part of HMP and rangeland program monitoring. The information obtained from the vegetation transects will be incorporated into final grazing decisions where appropriate.

CRUCIAL WILDLIFE AREAS

The six HMPs and two Coordinated Resource Management Plans in the Resource Area were developed for the management of various species or unique habitat types.

Big Hatchet/Alamo Hueco HMP

This HMP was developed in 1983 for the management of desert bighorn sheep (State-listed endangered species) habitat in the Big Hatchet Mountains, Little Hatchet Mountains, and the Alamo Hueco Mountains of southwest Hidalgo County. **THIS PLAN WILL BE REVISED IN 1993 AND THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF THIS REVISED PLAN WILL BE TO PROVIDE AND MANAGE HABITAT FOR A HERD SIZE OF 250 ANIMALS (NMDGF).**

Peloncillo Mountain HMP

This HMP was developed in 1984 for the management of desert bighorn sheep habitat. The HMP area is in western Hidalgo County and runs from I-10 in the north to the Coronado National Forest to the south. **THIS PLAN WILL BE REVISED IN 1994 AND THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF THE REVISED HMP WILL BE TO ENSURE HABITAT FOR 250 DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP (NMDGF).**

Florida Mountain HMP

The Plan was developed in 1979 and revised in 1988 for the management of Iranian ibex which were released into the Florida Mountains by the NMDGF in 1970. The Florida Mountains are located in southeast Luna County. The primary objective of the HMP is to manage the habitat for a ibex herd of 400 animals (post hunt), while maintaining adequate habitat for mule deer and other wildlife (except under Alternative B).

Franklin Mountain HMP

This HMP was developed in 1987 for the management of Sneed's pincushion cactus habitat. The HMP area is in the Franklin Mountains of southeastern Doña Ana County. The primary objective of the HMP is to manage the habitat to have at least three secure populations with a target population of 10,000 individuals in these three populations.

San Simon Cienega HMP

The Plan was developed in 1973 for the protection and enhancement of critical habitat for the Mexican duck. The HMP was revised in 1983 to enhance habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife species. A Coordinated Management Plan is currently being developed which will address livestock grazing, rangeland improvements, and wildlife habitat enhancement projects.

Organ Mountains Coordinated Resource Management Plan

The Organ Mountains Coordinated Resource Management Plan was developed in 1989 and includes portions which deal with wildlife and wildlife habitat. The primary objectives for wildlife consist of developing or protecting springs and riparian habitat, installation of wildlife waters, and possible introduction of desert bighorn sheep and turkeys.

Gila Lower Box Coordinated Resource Management Plan

The Coordinated Resource Management Plan was developed in 1985 to enhance and protect the riparian resources of the Gila Lower Box. The Gila Lower Box is located in northern Hidalgo County and stretches approximately **6** miles **ON PUBLIC LAND**. Along with protecting riparian values, the Coordinated Resource Management Plan also protects habitat for the diverse avian, mammalian, and reptilian species which occur in the Gila Lower Box.

Wildlife Management Actions

Wildlife management actions such as spring developments, exclosures, and game waters involve less than 1 acre of surface disturbance per year. The vegetation/land treatment actions for wildlife habitat improvement are included in the total estimate for vegetation treatments.

Prior to authorizing activities in crucial wildlife habitats such as winter ranges, raptor nest sites, and fawning habitat, considerations are made to avoid or minimize disturbance to wildlife. The area and time stipulations are shown in Table 2-11.

Grazing of domestic sheep **AND GOATS** will not be allowed in bighorn sheep habitat areas. **EXISTING GUIDANCE ALSO ADDRESSES BUFFER AREAS FOR GRAZING OF DOMESTIC SHEEP.**

Prescribed burn projects are designed to improve wildlife habitat. Rangeland management practices and rangeland improvements are designed or modified to maintain or improve wildlife habitats. Livestock grazing management will incorporate the needs of key plant species important to wildlife.

All new fences are built to allow for wildlife passage in accordance with BLM fence standards. Any existing fences obstructing wildlife movements will be brought into conformance with the adopted standards. Wildlife escape devices are installed on all new and existing water tanks or troughs within the Mimbres Resource Area.

The construction of new roads into crucial wildlife habitats will be avoided. Permanent or seasonal road closures may be instituted where problems exist or are expected.

Raptor habitat will be improved by requiring all new powerlines to be constructed to "electrocution proof" specifications. Any existing lines also may be modified to be "electrocution proof."

As HMPs are developed and implemented, particularly where the use of Sikes Act funds are involved, attention will be given to the development of basic facilities for users such as parking lots and trailheads.

Sikes Act projects to maintain, improve, or enhance wildlife habitat will be developed and implemented throughout the Resource Area.

TABLE 2-11
WILDLIFE AREA AND TIME STIPULATIONS

SPECIES	TIME PERIODS	AREA
Big Game		
Pronghorn antelope	Yearlong	**CRITICAL** Habitat Area
Desert bighorn sheep	Yearlong	**CRITICAL** Habitat Area
T&E and Candidate Species		
Common black hawk	3/1-8/30	½ mi radius from nest
Ferruginous hawk	2/1-7/30	½ mi radius from nest
Peregrine falcon	2/1-8/30	½ mi radius from nest
Species of Concern		
Golden eagle	2/1-7/15	½ mi radius from nest
Special Habitats		
Riparian, springs, wetlands, ponds, arroyo habitats	Yearlong	Within 500 feet

Source: BLM Files, 1990.

CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The objective of the Mimbres cultural resource program is to manage cultural resources on public land in a manner that protects and provides for their proper use. Cultural resources include archaeological, historic, and socio-cultural properties. Paleontology and natural history are also managed under the cultural resource program although paleontology is addressed separately in this document.

The degree of management is commensurate with the scientific or socio-cultural values of the resource, the degree of threat, and the resource's vulnerability. Under this concept, the Mimbres Resource Area attempts to protect a representative sample of the full array of cultural resources, both prehistoric and historic, found on BLM-administered public land. Federal laws such as the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) as amended, the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) of 1979 as amended, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) of 1978, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA), and FLPMA provide for the protection and management of cultural resources.

These laws are implemented through Federal regulations which provide guidance for the cultural resource program in meeting the requirements of the law. These regulations, as amended, determine how the NHPA shall be implemented by Federal agencies, State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs), and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. In New Mexico, a Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement (PMOA) between the above three parties further defines these roles and streamlines the consultation process.

In addition to Federal regulations, special agreements such as the PMOA cited above, instruction manuals, and memoranda are issued at various departmental levels to provide both general and specific guidance for the management of cultural resources. Current instruction memoranda issued at the National, State, and District levels are retained in the Mimbres Resource Area files and are incorporated by reference.

Archaeological and historic resources are evaluated initially under the eligibility criteria of the National Register of Historic Places. Sites listed or eligible for the National Register are managed under BLM procedures which have been developed in conformance with relevant laws and regulations.

Socio-cultural resources are managed in accordance with AIRFA and NAGPRA, and with relevant sections of the regulations, which take into account concerns of Indian tribes in the implementation of ARPA. The consultation process with Indian tribes concerning sites and locations of traditional religious significance is open and on-going and has occurred in the preparation of this document.

Inventory

The BLM undertakes inventory and maintains a cultural resource database for all BLM-administered public land. These inventories are categorized into three classes: Class I - Existing inventory and literature search; Class II - Sampling field inventory (all sample units are inventoried to Class III standards); and Class III -Intensive field inventory. Except under certain specific conditions set forth under the BLM Cultural Resource Manuals, Class III inventory is required before any surface disturbance may occur.

The Mimbres Resource Area maintains a cumulative site inventory documenting the locations of all known sites, all areas surveyed, and areas known to be devoid of cultural resources. In the Mimbres Resource Area, the latter situation exists only in isolated tracts previously subject to Class III survey with negative results, or subject to total surface alteration in the past through natural or human forces. All unsurveyed portions of the Mimbres Resource Area can be expected to contain varying densities of cultural resources.

A Class I inventory has been completed under a cooperative agreement with NMSU. Cultural resources in the Mimbres Resource Area were organized into five classes and subclasses which roughly parallel traditional Southwestern cultural/temporal distinctions: (1) Paleoindian, (2) Archaic, (3) Pueblo (Mogollon), (4) Historic, and (5) Unknown. These management classifications generalize broad, temporally-based classes of sites, allowing the development of long-term management strategies appropriate to a particular class.

Approximately 3,000 cultural resource sites are presently recorded within the Mimbres Resource Area. Estimates on the total number of sites range from 50,000 to 100,000. Among the recorded and projected sites, a large percentage are probably eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, primarily under Criterion "D". Two sites within the Mimbres Resource Area are currently listed on, or have been formally nominated to, the New Mexico State Register of Historic Properties. These are Fort Cummings and Cooke's Springhouse. None are on the National Register.

Evaluation

The management goal category system establishes long-term strategies for each of the five classes of cultural resources. These goal categories provide the basis for committing individual cultural resource sites or properties to a specific-use category.

BLM evaluates cultural resources according to the use-category system. This category system is based on the consideration of actual or potential use of individual sites or properties and includes: (1) Current Scientific Use, (2) Potential Scientific Use, (3) Conservation for Future Use, (4) Management Use, (5) Socio-Cultural Use, (6) Public Use, and (7) Discharge Use.

Cultural Resource Management Plans

The Mimbres Resource Area is currently implementing the Organ Mountains Coordinated Resource Management Plan and the Fort Cummings and Butterfield Trail Cultural Resource Management Plans. Future plans would be developed for some of the ACECs identified in this RMP/EIS.

Protection

The Mimbres Resource Area protects cultural resources on a limited basis through the application of both administrative (such as off-road vehicle closure) and physical measures (such as fencing) as necessitated by the cultural resource's scientific and socio-cultural value, vulnerability, and degree of threat. Interim protection focuses primarily on the Patrol and Surveillance Plan, until specific cultural resource management objectives are developed.

Mimbres Resource Area has implemented a formal Patrol and Surveillance Plan designed to protect major, well-known sites, investigate conditions of vandalism and natural forces in remote areas, and increase site inventories through site recordation during patrols. An active program of signing cultural resource properties under threat of active or potential vandalism will continue. These current management practices appear to have decreased the level of vandal-caused damage to specific sites, such as Fort Cummings, and have had positive effects throughout the Mimbres Resource Area. Vandalism appears to have stabilized at a level reduced from previous years.

Resource Stabilization

Although vandalism appears to have stabilized in recent years, extensive past vandalism is a primary cause in the rapid deterioration of the sites which are presently most endangered.

Actions to stabilize degradation of ruins will be common to all RMP alternatives. These actions may involve physical measures to control erosion and arroyo cutting and acquisition of sterile fill from BLM sources for recontouring of damaged sites. Erosion control may average 10 acres of protective measures per year and recontouring may require an average of 2,000 cubic yards of fill annually.

Appendix E provides further detail on cultural resources, inventory, goal systems, and use categories.

Program Direction

The legislative and regulatory framework cited at the beginning of this section is implemented in the field by the Mimbres Resource Area cultural resource program outlined above. The cultural resource program protects archaeological and historical properties from impacts through the Section 106 process of the NHPA and has evolved to also proactively manage significant properties on public land. In addition to the existing program, two elements of continuing management guidance need to be focused through planning and implemented through this RMP. These are inventory and nomination of sites to the National Register.

Section 110 of the NHPA and ARPA as amended, state that it is the responsibility of each Federal agency to establish a program to locate, inventory, and nominate all properties under the agency's ownership or control that appear to qualify for inclusion in the National Register. The Mimbres Resource Area cultural resource program will meet its responsibilities to Section 110 by establishing a goal for completion of a 10-percent inventory over the 20-year life of the Plan.

Although the 10-percent sample will be stratified across the entire Mimbres Resource Area, an initial focus will be in Hidalgo and Luna Counties and all cultural ACECs. This sample will provide comprehensive data which may be used to determine significance of sites and enable the BLM to make well-balanced decisions. An overall goal of the sample inventory will be to gather sufficient data to build a model of cultural processes which are reflected in site density and distribution for the Mimbres Resource Area.

In addition, National Register nominations will be prepared on a regular basis. A goal of one nomination per year has been set. These actions will allow the cultural resources staff to make better informed decisions about the direct and indirect impacts on cultural resources. It will also significantly strengthen the current management approach for protection of cultural resource sites.

Paleontology

MANAGEMENT OF PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES IN THE MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA IS BASICALLY DIRECTED BY THE FEDERAL LAND POLICY AND MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1976, INTERPRETATION OF VARIOUS OTHER LEGISLATIVE ACTS, AND VARIOUS INSTRUCTION MEMORANDA. THROUGH THESE, THE BLM'S MANDATE IS TO MANAGE AND PROTECT FOSSIL RESOURCES THAT OCCUR ON THE PUBLIC LAND IT ADMINISTERS. THE BLM IS PRESENTLY INVOLVED IN A PROCESS TO DEVELOP SPECIFIC LEGISLATION AND A

COMPREHENSIVE SET OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES ON PUBLIC LAND. THIS EFFORT IS BEING COORDINATED BY BLM WITH THE COOPERATION OF THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, REPRESENTATIVES OF VARIOUS STATE GOVERNMENTS, PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES, AND AMATEUR AND COMMERCIAL COLLECTORS. DRAFT REGULATIONS ARE EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED IN 1994. PRESENTLY, PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES ARE MANAGED THROUGH THE ISSUANCE OF SCIENTIFIC USE PERMITS (FOR VERTEBRATE FOSSILS) BY THE BLM NEW MEXICO STATE OFFICE.

THE FINALIZATION OF THESE REGULATIONS WILL NOT ALTER POLICY BASED ON OTHER PRE-EXISTING FORMS OF LEGISLATION AND REGULATION SUCH AS THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT OF 1969 (NEPA); THE WILDERNESS PRESERVATION ACT OF 1964; 40 CFR 1500; 43 CFR 1600, 2740, 2800, 3000, AND 8224.

UNTIL RECENTLY, PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES IN THE MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA WERE GIVEN A LOW-LEVEL OF MANAGEMENT ATTENTION. THIS WAS BECAUSE IT WAS PERCEIVED THAT USE BY BOTH PROFESSIONAL RESEARCHERS AND HOBBY COLLECTORS HAD BEEN LIMITED IN COMPARISON TO OTHER REGIONS WHERE RESOURCE VISIBILITY WAS HIGH BECAUSE OF SCIENTIFIC INTEREST OR WHERE CONFLICTING LAND USES RAISED VERTEBRATE FOSSILS AS AN ISSUE. HOWEVER, IN REALITY, THIS IS A RESULT OF RESEARCHERS AND OTHER COLLECTORS NOT COMMUNICATING THEIR ACTIVITIES TO EACH OTHER OR BLM. THE MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA DOES CONTAIN SIGNIFICANT FOSSIL AREAS IN NEED OF PROTECTION AND INTERPRETATION FOR THE PUBLIC, SUCH AS IN THE CASE OF THE PREHISTORIC TRACKWAYS IN THE ROBLEDO MOUNTAINS.

THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION OF THESE RESOURCES DEPENDS ON SEVERAL ELEMENTS: (1) THE ABILITY OF THE BLM TO IDENTIFY THESE RESOURCES WHERE THEY OCCUR; (2) A PLANNING SYSTEM THAT PROVIDES A PROCESS FOR THE RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS; AND (3) A COMPREHENSIVE SET OF REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES WHICH FOSTERS A SPIRIT OF COOPERATION AND INFORMED RESTRAINT AMONG PUBLIC LAND USERS.

OBJECTIVES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES ARE:

- IDENTIFY AND EVALUATE PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES SO THAT THEY MAY BE ADEQUATELY ADDRESSED THROUGH THE BLM'S PLANNING SYSTEM AND ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS DOCUMENTS.

- DEVELOP ACTIVITY PLANS WHICH CARRY OUT THE OBJECTIVES OF APPROVED LAND USE PLANS TO PROTECT THOSE PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES CONSIDERED TO BE OF SCIENTIFIC INTEREST.

- PROVIDE FOR USES SUCH AS SCIENTIFIC COLLECTION AND RESEARCH, RECREATIONAL/HOBBY COLLECTING, AND EDUCATIONAL OR INTERPRETIVE ACTIVITIES.

- INCREASE THE AWARENESS OF FEDERAL LAND MANAGERS AND THE PUBLIC REGARDING PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.

- PROMOTE CONSISTENCY AMONG FEDERAL AGENCIES HAVING PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND FACILITATE THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AMONG FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZATIONS

CONCERNED WITH THE MANAGEMENT, STUDY, AND PROTECTION OF THESE RESOURCES.

- **EVALUATE FOR PROTECTION, FOSSILS OF SCIENTIFIC INTEREST WHICH MAY OCCUR IN ASSOCIATION WITH ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL MINERALS SUCH AS COAL, HUMATE, SAND AND GRAVEL, LIMESTONE, AND GYPSUM.**
- **ACCORD THE PROTECTION PROVIDED UNDER LAW TO FOSSILS OF SCIENTIFIC INTEREST.**

RECREATION

Recreation programs are managed according to multiple-use principles unless otherwise specified by law (such as FLPMA) or BLM policy. The objective of the program is to ensure the continued availability of quality outdoor recreation opportunities and experiences that are not readily available from other sources. Recreation use is managed in order to protect the health and safety of visitors; to protect natural, cultural, and other resource values; to stimulate public enjoyment of public land and to resolve user conflicts. The Recreation 2000 initiative places recent added emphasis on expanding and creating a more effective recreation program Bureauwide.

A range of outdoor recreation opportunities such as backpacking, camping, sightseeing, hunting, climbing, picnicking, mountain biking, and motorcycling will continue to be provided for all segments of the public, commensurate with demand. Trails and other means of public access will continue to be maintained and developed where necessary to enhance recreation opportunities and allow public use.

Developed Recreation

Developed facilities exist only in the Organ Mountains. These include the Aguirre Spring Recreation Area, A. B. Cox Visitor Center, La Cueva Picnic Area, Pine Tree Trail, Baylor Pass Trail, Dripping Springs Natural Area Trail, and the Aguirre Spring Recreation Area Access Road. Management of these areas is outlined in the Organ Mountains Coordinated Resource Management Plan (BLM 1989).

Dispersed Recreation

Current management direction for dispersed recreation opportunities is provided for in the regulations and subsequent BLM manuals. The major form of dispersed recreation in the Resource Area is hunting.

Motorized Recreation

It is BLM policy (by Executive Order) that all public land be **DESIGNATED** as "open", "limited", or "closed" to motorized and nonmotorized vehicle use (see Appendix F-2). Public land in the Mimbres Resource Area is "open" to motorized vehicles unless an interim, standard, or emergency closure **DESIGNATION** is in effect or is needed to restrict or close areas to protect resources, reduce user conflicts, or enhance public safety.

Scenic or Backcountry Byways

BLM's program of **DEDICATING** certain roads as scenic or backcountry byways will continue. After designation, byway management implementation plans will be developed and the routes will be signed. Proposed roads include the following:

- Aguirre Spring Recreation Area Road
- Red Rock Road
- Highway 81, Hachita to Mexican border
- Antelope Pass (U.S. 80)
- Highway 26, Deming to Hatch
- Dripping Springs Road
- Baylor Canyon Road

Environmental assessments of nominations will be prepared on a case-by-case basis.

Cave Inventory and Management

An inventory of cave resources will be conducted, and caves will be managed in accordance with the Federal Cave Resources Protection Act of 1988 and related BLM policy. Significant cave locations would not be made public, and any actions which could adversely affect significant caves will be deferred or denied. BLM would take appropriate protection measures as needed.

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)

The BLM utilizes the ROS as a framework for defining outdoor recreation opportunity environments. It is the management tool for inventory, planning, and administration of outdoor recreation resources on public land. A general description of the ROS classes is contained in Appendix F-2.

Currently, ROS objectives have only been established within the Organ Mountains. Table 2-12 displays the public land acreages per ROS class. Additional ROS inventory is needed for the remainder of the Mimbres Resource Area and should be completed within the next 5 years.

TABLE 2-12
ROS CLASS MANAGEMENT ACREAGES
IN THE ORGAN MOUNTAINS RECREATION LANDS

OPPORTUNITY CLASS		ACREAGE
RURAL		17
ROADED NATURAL		5,860
SEMIPRIMITIVE MOTORIZED		14,820
SEMIPRIMITIVE NONMOTORTIZED		6,470
	TOTAL	27,167

Source: BLM Files, 1990.

Recreational Fishing

THE BLM IS WORKING TO ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FISHING ON PUBLIC LAND THROUGH THE RECREATIONAL FISHING INITIATIVE, WHICH IS PART OF THE RECREATION 2000 INITIATIVE. RECREATIONAL FISHING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE RESOURCE AREA ARE LIMITED TO THE GILA RIVER AND THE RIO GRANDE. THERE IS SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL TO IMPROVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FISHING IN THESE AREAS THROUGH FISH HABITAT IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS, FACILITY DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING PARKING AREAS AND ACCESS ROUTES, AND LAND ACQUISITION. THE RECENT EXCLUSION OF LIVESTOCK FROM THE GILA LOWER BOX WILL EVENTUALLY ALLOW CHANNEL AND BANK STABILIZATION THAT SHOULD SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE FISH HABITAT AND FISHING QUALITY.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Visual resources will continue to be evaluated as part of resource management activity and project planning. A contrast rating process is used as a project assessment tool during environmental review of affected areas. Appropriate stipulations are established to ensure compatibility of the project with management objectives for visual resources.

Management Objectives

The BLM administers visual resources on public land according to four Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class objectives (see Appendix G for descriptions). Table 2-13 displays the total acreages by class of inventoried public and nonpublic lands. These constraints will remain in effect except where modified by management prescriptions for new ACECs.

TABLE 2-13
VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACREAGES
WITHIN THE MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

CLASS		ACREAGE
VRM CLASS I		8,709
VRM CLASS II		849,842
VRM CLASS III		648,004
VRM CLASS IV		1,572,908
	TOTAL	3,079,463

Source: BLM Files, 1990.

The VRM system will continue to be the basic tool for inventory, planning, and management of visual resources on public land. A visual contrast rating will be prepared for all projects proposed within highly sensitive areas and for potentially high impact projects, regardless of location.

Congressionally designated areas are subject to Class I VRM guidelines. WSAs are subject to an interim Class II category.

WILDERNESS

The 14 WSAs in the Mimbres Resource Area will be managed under Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Land Under Wilderness Review (BLM 1987), until the area is either added to the National Wilderness Preservation System or removed from further wilderness consideration. If designated as wilderness, the area will be managed under the Wilderness Management Policy (BLM 1981). If removed from further wilderness consideration, the area will be managed under the guidance prescribed by this RMP. BLM wilderness recommendations for the 14 WSAs plus the three areas in New Mexico that are administered by the Safford District are shown in Table 2-14 and on Map 2-2.

Wilderness suitability recommendations for the 14 existing WSAs were provided in the New Mexico Statewide Wilderness Study Final Environmental Impact Statement (BLM 1988) and will be unaffected by this RMP. The RMP will not address wilderness management of any areas designated by Congress as wilderness. Post-designation management will be detailed inseparate Wilderness Management Plans. The RMP will prescribe management for any of the 14 WSAs that are released from wilderness study by Congress.

As changes in land ownership occur, newly acquired areas would be inventories and studied as necessary through the RMP process.

SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

The Endangered Species Act requires that the BLM consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) on all actions which may affect a special status species (and to confer for proposed species).

BLM policy, as described in Manual 6840.**06**, for the endangered species program is to give priority to the protection and management of habitat for known populations of Federal or State listed species, to prevent the listing of Federal candidates, and to assist in recovery of listed species.

Present management for Federal or State species consists of protecting and enhancing habitat and all proposed actions **ARE EVALUATED** for their potential impact on known populations of, or potential habitat for, listed or candidate species and to develop and implement recovery plans with objectives for listed species on public land. Conservation of habitat can be accomplished through special designations such as ACECs. The Organ Mountains Coordinated Resource Management Plan also provides specific management guidance for special status species within that area. Compliance with the Endangered Species Act (Section 7 Compliance) is required for all Federal actions regardless of land ownership. Other Coordinated Resource Management Plans and HMPs will include objectives and planned actions for the recovery of listed species within those areas, in accordance with recovery plan objectives.

Inventory for Federal **LISTED AND CANDIDATE SPECIES AND STATE ENDANGERED OR RARE** species will continue, and monitoring programs will be implemented on known populations of **THESE** species. Where monitoring identifies threats to these populations, appropriate actions will be taken to protect the species and its habitat.

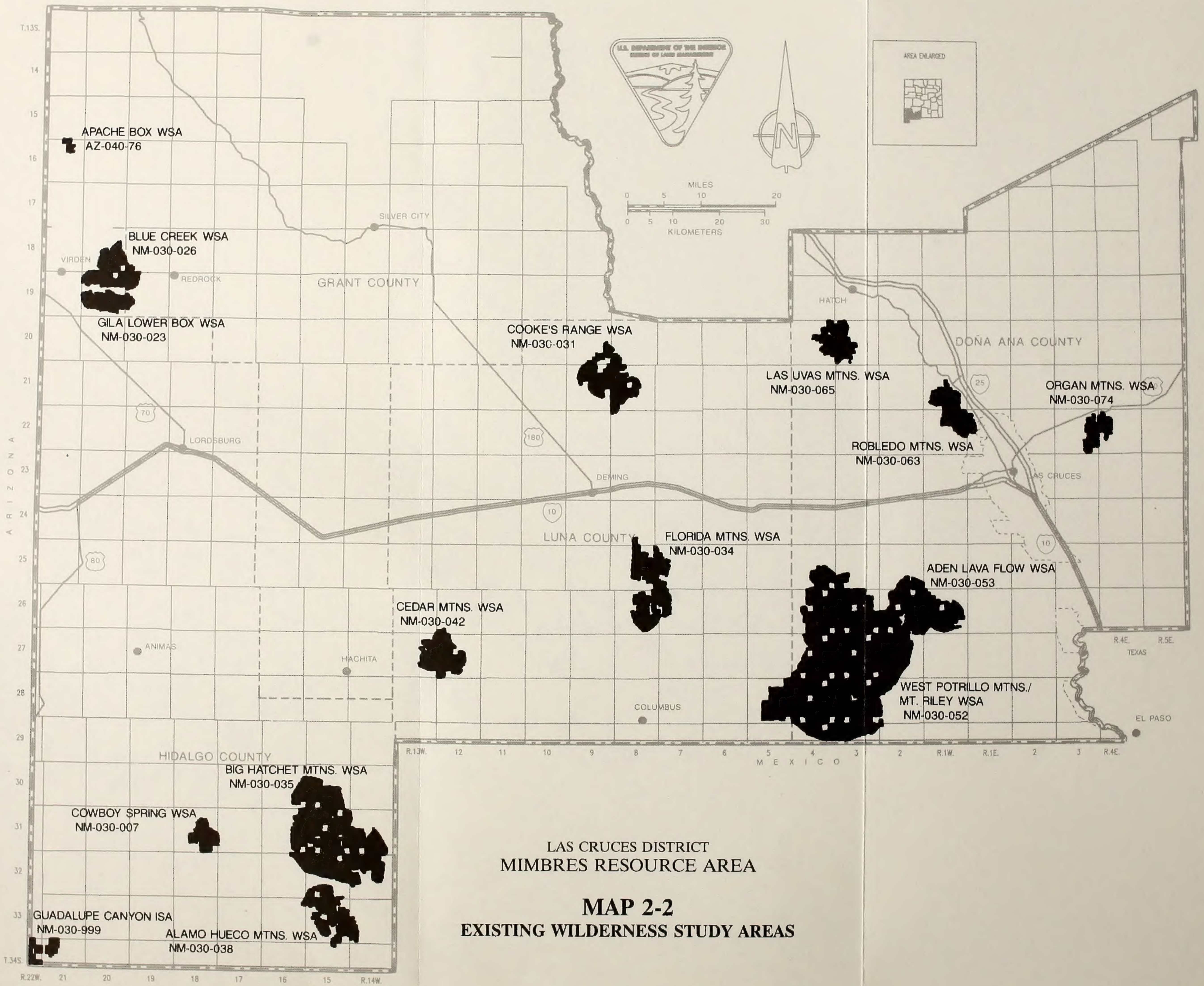
RIPARIAN AND ARROYO HABITATS

In 1987, the BLM adopted a formal riparian policy directed at achieving a healthy and productive ecological condition for public land riparian areas.

Other laws and policies deal with wetlands, floodplains, and related areas which are encompassed by the term riparian.

Riparian areas are defined as an area of land directly influenced by permanent water. They have visible vegetation or physical characteristics reflective of permanent water influence. Spring areas and streambanks are typical riparian areas. Ephemeral streams or washes that do not exhibit the presence of vegetation dependent upon free water in the soil are excluded.

Riparian areas are extremely limited in size and extent throughout the desert Southwest. As such they are unique and extremely important, not only for many species of wildlife that are dependent on them, but also for maintenance of water quality,


U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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MILES
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AREA ENLARGED
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BLUE CREEK WSA
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GILA LOWER BOX WSA
NM-030-023
COOKE'S RANGE WSA
NM-030-031
LAS UVAS MTNS. WSA
NM-030-065
ORGAN MTNS. WSA
NM-030-074
ROBLEDO MTNS. WSA
NM-030-063
FLORIDA MTNS. WSA
NM-030-034
ADEN LAVA FLOW WSA
NM-030-053
CEDAR MTNS. WSA
NM-030-042
WEST POTRILLO MTNS./
MT. RILEY WSA
NM-030-052
BIG HATCHET MTNS. WSA
NM-030-035
COWBOY SPRING WSA
NM-030-007
GUADALUPE CANYON ISA
NM-030-999
ALAMO HUECO MTNS. WSA
NM-030-038
GRANT COUNTY
LUNA COUNTY
HIDALGO COUNTY
DOÑA ANA COUNTY
SILVER CITY
VIRDEN
REDROCK
LORDSBURG
DEMING
HATCH
LAS CRUCES
ANIMAS
HACHITA
COLUMBUS
EL PASO
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R.5E.

LAS CRUCES DISTRICT
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

MAP 2-2
EXISTING WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

TABLE 2-14
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA
WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

WSA	TOTAL BLM ACRES	SUITABLE ACREAGE	NON SUITABLE ACREAGE
Aden Lava Flow	25,287	25,287	0
Alamo Hueco Mountains	16,264	0	16,264
Apache Box*	932	0	932
Big Hatchet Mountains	65,872	45,374	20,498
Blue Creek	14,896	0	14,896
Cedar Mountains	14,911	0	14,911
Cooke's Range	19,608	0	19,608
Cowboy Spring	6,699	6,699	0
Florida Mountains	22,336	0	22,336
Gila Lower Box	8,555	5,835	2,720
Guadalupe Canyon*	4,145	0	4,145
HOVERROCKER*	**2,791**	**0**	**2,791**
Organ Mountains	7,283	7,283	0
Peloncillo Mountains*	4,061	0	4,061
Robledo Mountains	12,946	0	12,946
Las Uvas Mountains	11,067	0	11,067
West Potrillo Mountains and Mount Riley	157,185	148,540	8,645
TOTAL	**382,909**	**239,018**	**153,029**

Source: BLM New Mexico Statewide Wilderness Study, Final Environmental Impact Statement, 1988.

Note: *Areas administered by the BLM Safford District.

spring and stream flow, and forage production. Many of these small areas are in a degraded condition. Special management is needed to maintain or restore these important areas.

Arroyo habitats associated with the many dry washes throughout the Resource Area are not considered riparian areas by definition. However, because of their unique and diverse vegetation which often occurs in stark contrast to surrounding desert areas, they are considered important areas which may require special management attention.

Riparian areas will not be disposed of through sale or exchange unless disposal would be in the public interest.

Suppression of wildfire in riparian habitats will have a high priority unless fire is a natural part of the ecosystem. Riparian areas which have burned will be rehabilitated as necessary through protection, reseeding or planting.

Grazing management practices will be designed and established to meet riparian and water quality needs in the development of new AMPs and in the revision of existing AMPs. In those instances where management systems alone cannot meet objectives, provisions for fencing or other means of exclusion will be utilized. No livestock-related activities such as salting, feeding, construction of holding facilities, and stock driveways will be allowed to occur within riparian zones **UNLESS SPECIFICALLY AUTHORIZED.**

Construction activities which remove or destroy riparian vegetation will be avoided.

Minerals management actions and special stipulations or conditions will be designed to be compatible with riparian habitat management goals. Riparian buffer zones will be identified and provided for in the exploration and development of mineral resources.

There will be no vegetation treatments in riparian areas using herbicides **EXCEPT FOR SELECTED TREATMENT OF NON-NATIVE SPECIES SUCH AS SALT CEDAR.**

All new spring developments will be designed to protect riparian areas, while selected existing spring developments will be modified for the same reason. Where possible, and if the need exists for wildlife, **PARTS OF RESERVOIRS WILL BE FENCED OR WATER FOR LIVESTOCK WILL BE PROVIDED AWAY FROM THE RESERVOIRS IN CONSULTATION WITH THE PERMITTEE.** Wildlife habitat needs will be considered when reservoir site determinations are made.

In the Mimbres Resource Area, the Gila River Coordinated Resource Management Plan (Lower Gila Box Riparian ACEC), the Organ Mountains Coordinated Resource Management Plan and the San Simon Cienega HMP provide specific guidance for management of riparian resources within those areas. Other special management areas such as the Placitas Arroyo Riparian Demonstration Area would also continue to be protected and managed for their riparian values. New activity plans would be developed on a case-by-case basis, as needed.

Throughout the Mimbres Resource Area, riparian and arroyo habitat management would continue to be coordinated with other programs and activities as needed. Specific programs include Range, Wildlife, Watershed, Recreation, and Lands. Riparian and arroyo habitat values would be addressed in all surface and vegetation disturbing actions. Riparian areas would have a higher priority for funding, management, and protection than arroyo habitats.

THE PROPOSED PLAN

THE PROPOSED PLAN IS ALTERNATIVE D FROM THE DRAFT RMP/EIS (THE RESOURCE CONSERVATION OR PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE IN THE DRAFT) MODIFIED AS A RESULT OF PUBLIC INPUT. THE PROPOSED PLAN attempts to resolve the planning issues by incorporating **FEATURES OF THE OTHER ALTERNATIVES.**

ISSUES

1. Land Ownership Adjustment

Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN, 156,460** acres of public land would be identified for disposal through R&PP, sale or exchange (see Map 2-3). Certain public land parcels are identified for disposal because of their location or other characteristics that make them difficult and uneconomic to manage; or their disposal would serve important public objectives, including but not limited to, expansion of communities and economic development. These areas are mainly on the East Mesa between Las Cruces and the Organ Mountains, the West Mesa, and isolated parcels in Grant County and northern Luna County. None of the areas identified for disposal are within an ACEC or other SMA. The existing decisions regarding disposal (as outlined in the Southern Rio Grande MFP Amendment) (BLM 1986) would be carried forward with slight modification. **SEVEN** sections of land adjacent to the proposed Organ Mountains National Conservation Area that were identified for disposal in the Southern Rio Grande MFP Amendment would not be disposed under **THE PROPOSED PLAN (T. 22 S., R. 3 E., SECTIONS 16, 21, 28, AND 33; T. 23 S., R. 3 E., SECTION 33; T. 25 S., R. 3 E., SECTION 35; AND T. 26 S., R. 5 E., SECTION 31.).** Coordination would be made with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) for reservation of easements on parcels adjacent to but not contiguous with Forest land as they are disposed. To facilitate orderly disposal on the East Mesa, two disposal zones would be delineated:

- First priority for disposal would be public land west of a north-south line 1 mile east of the boundary between R. 2 E. and R. 3 E.

- Second priority for disposal would be public land east of the line described above.

All public land not identified for disposal would be managed in accordance with the provisions of Section 102(a) of FLPMA **(2,896,080 acres)**. See Map 2-3. No public land contiguous to USFS land would be disposed regardless of parcel size, and no public land within ACECs and other SMAs would be disposed. Public land may be disposed of through exchange in order to consolidate other public land outside of disposal areas. Only lands within **DISPOSAL** areas will be exchanged for lands outside the Resource Area.

Under this alternative, 93,110 acres of State trust land and 56,210 acres of private land would be identified for potential acquisition. All State trust land and private land would be acquired within ACECs and other SMAs **THROUGH EXCHANGE OR PURCHASE AT FAIR MARKET VALUE, PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION.** Picacho Peak would also be identified for potential acquisition. If acquired, Picacho Peak might have ACEC potential, so the area would be managed under temporary special management until a decision is made in an RMP Amendment or Revision. The temporary special management would include the following:

- Exclude ROW authorizations

- Manage as VRM Class II

- Limit vehicles to designated roads and trails

- Close to mineral material sales

2. ACECs and Other SMAs

Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN, 21** areas would be designated as ACECs. The total acreage of the ACECs would be **183,180** acres. Table 2-**15** lists the ACECs with their acreages and resource values and Map 2-**4** shows the locations of the proposed ACECs. Appendix H-1 contains a general description, management goals, planned actions, and a map for each ACEC.

UNDER THE PROPOSED PLAN, FOUR AREAS WOULD BE DESIGNATED OR MAINTAINED AS RESEARCH NATURAL AREAS (RNAs). THE TOTAL ACREAGE WOULD BE 17,870 ACRES. SEE MAP 2-4. THESE AREAS ARE:

- **ADEN LAVA FLOW (3,930 ACRES)**
- **ANTELOPE PASS (8,710 ACRES)**
- **LORDSBURG PLAYA (4,510 ACRES)**
- **PALEOZOIC TRACKWAYS (720 ACRES)**

IN ADDITION, THE KILBOURNE HOLE NATIONAL NATURAL LANDMARK (NNL) WOULD REMAIN AS AN NNL (5,480 ACRES). SEE MAP 2-4. ALSO, SEE APPENDIX H-3.

The Butterfield Trail **CORRIDOR** (15,690 acres) would be designated and managed for historical resources. The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail **CORRIDOR** (48,450 acres) would be designated and managed for scenic resources. These trails are shown on Map 2-5 and discussed in Appendix H-2. The trails would be managed in accordance with the management prescriptions in Appendix H-2.

VALID EXISTING RIGHTS WOULD BE RECOGNIZED WITHIN THESE AREAS AND WOULD NOT BE RESTRICTED UNLESS SPECIFICALLY STATED IN THE MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS FOR EACH ACEC OR SMA.

The following four areas, totalling **33,280** acres, **WOULD BE DESIGNATED AS WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS** (**WSAs**) (see Map 2-**6**). These areas **WOULD** be managed according to the Bureau's Interim Management Guidelines for areas studied under Section 202 of FLPMA until the study is complete, and the areas are either designated as wilderness or released by Congress.

- Organ Needles (7,630 acres)
- Gray Peak (**14,678** acres)
- Apache Box (6,300 acres)
- Peña Blanca (4,470 acres)

Appendix I contains the Wilderness Inventory Reports.

The Gila Lower Box (2,480 acres) and the Gila Middle Box (760 acres) (see Map 2-**6**) would be designated as Wild and Scenic River study areas. Appendix J contains the Wild and Scenic River **INVENTORY SUMMARY.**

3. Vehicle Management

Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN,** vehicle designations would be made for the entire Resource Area as follows:

- Open: 16,190 acres

- Limited to existing roads and trails: 2,371,630 acres

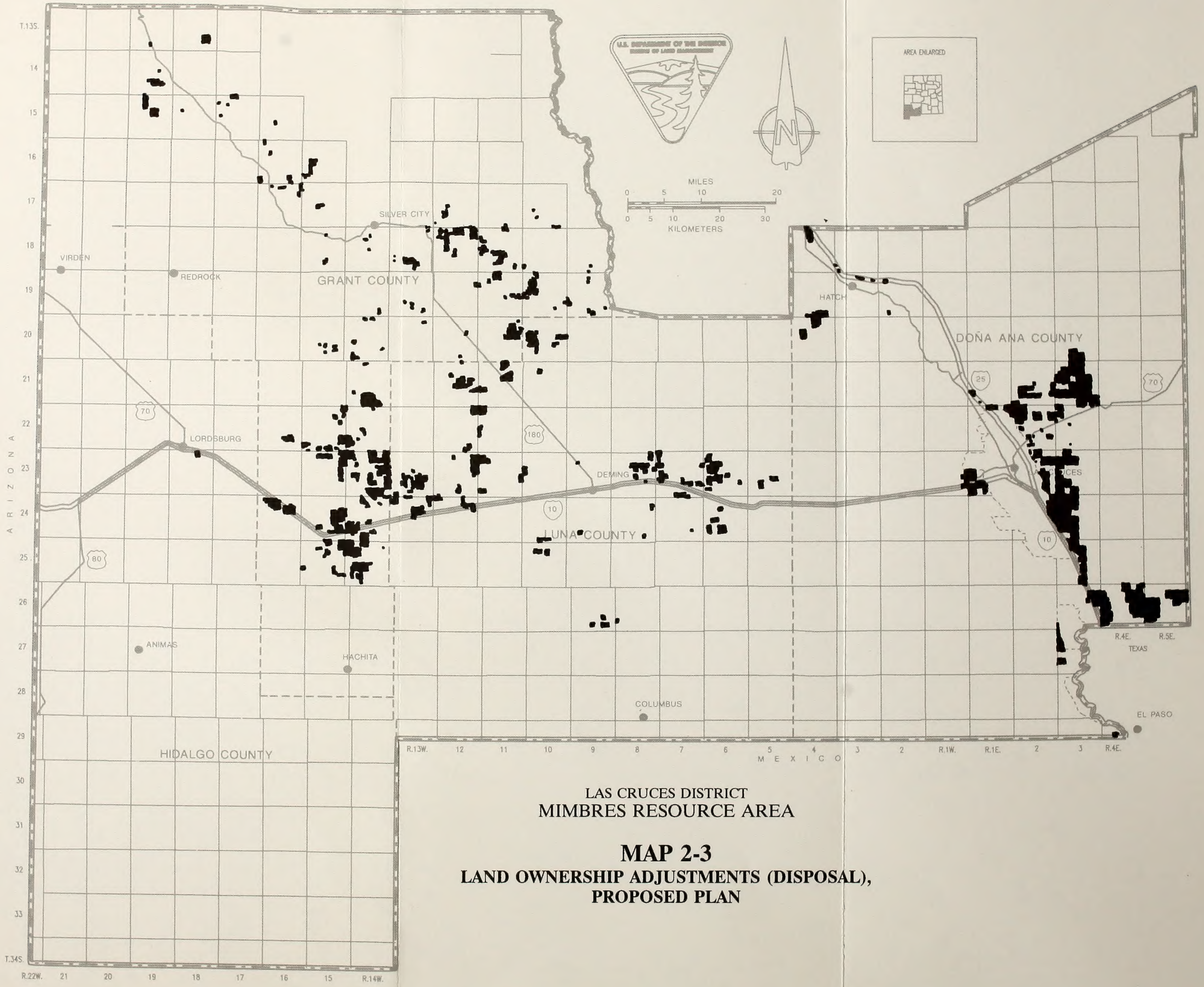
- Limited to designated roads and trails: **532,530** acres

- Closed: **133,470** acres

These areas are shown on Map 2-**7**.

The areas open to vehicle use would be the Aden Hills Open Area (8,700 acres) and the Lordsburg Playa Open Area (7,490 acres). The support needs for these areas would include a Class 3 cultural survey. The areas limited to designated roads and trails for vehicle use would be all SMAs not designated closed and the Broad Canyon competitive motorcycle race area. The areas closed to vehicle use would be the Mexican border area (89,180 acres), portions of the Organ/Franklin Mountains, Big Hatchet Mountains, and Florida Mountains ACECs (18,900 acres), and the following **SEVEN SMAs** (18,280 acres):

- Apache Box **ACEC**
- Bear Creek **ACEC**
- Gila Lower Box **ACEC**
- Gila Middle Box **ACEC**
- Lordsburg Playa **RNA**
- Old Town **ACEC**
- Uvas Valley **ACEC**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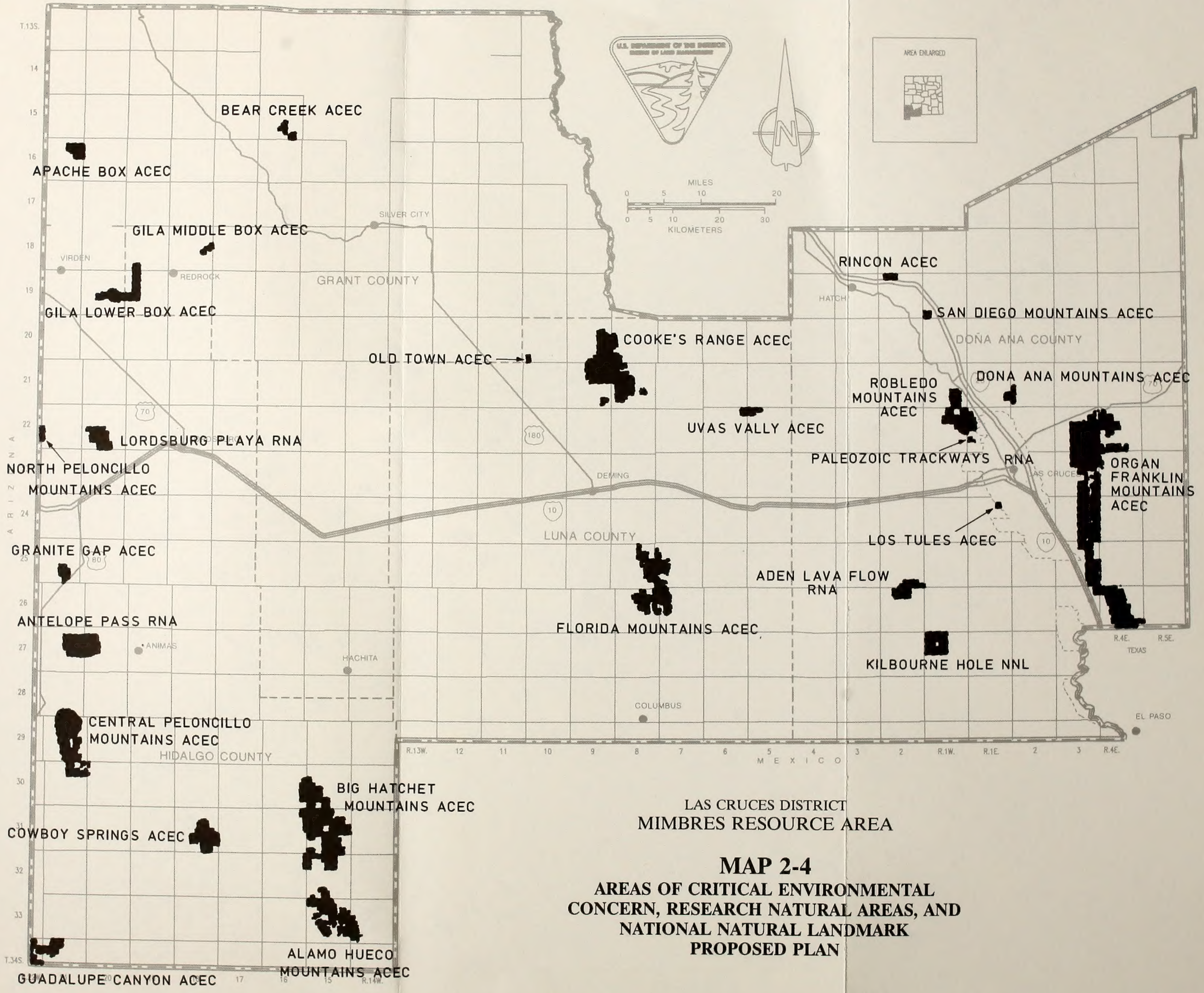
LAS CRUCES DISTRICT
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

MAP 2-3
LAND OWNERSHIP ADJUSTMENTS (DISPOSAL), PROPOSED PLAN


BEAR CREEK ACEC
APACHE BOX ACEC
GILA MIDDLE BOX ACEC
GILA LOWER BOX ACEC
OLD TOWN ACEC
COOKE'S RANGE ACEC
RINCON ACEC
SAN DIEGO MOUNTAINS ACEC
DOÑA ANA COUNTY
ROBLEDO MOUNTAINS ACEC
DONA ANA MOUNTAINS ACEC
UVAS VALLY ACEC
PALEOZOIC TRACKWAYS RNA
LORDSBURG PLAYA RNA
NORTH PELONCILLO MOUNTAINS ACEC
ORGAN FRANKLIN MOUNTAINS ACEC
LOS TULES ACEC
GRANITE GAP ACEC
ADEN LAVA FLOW RNA
ANTELOPE PASS RNA
FLORIDA MOUNTAINS ACEC
KILBOURNE HOLE NNL
CENTRAL PELONCILLO MOUNTAINS ACEC
HIDALGO COUNTY
BIG HATCHET MOUNTAINS ACEC
COWBOY SPRINGS ACEC
ALAMO HUECO MOUNTAINS ACEC
GUADALUPE CANYON ACEC
GRANT COUNTY
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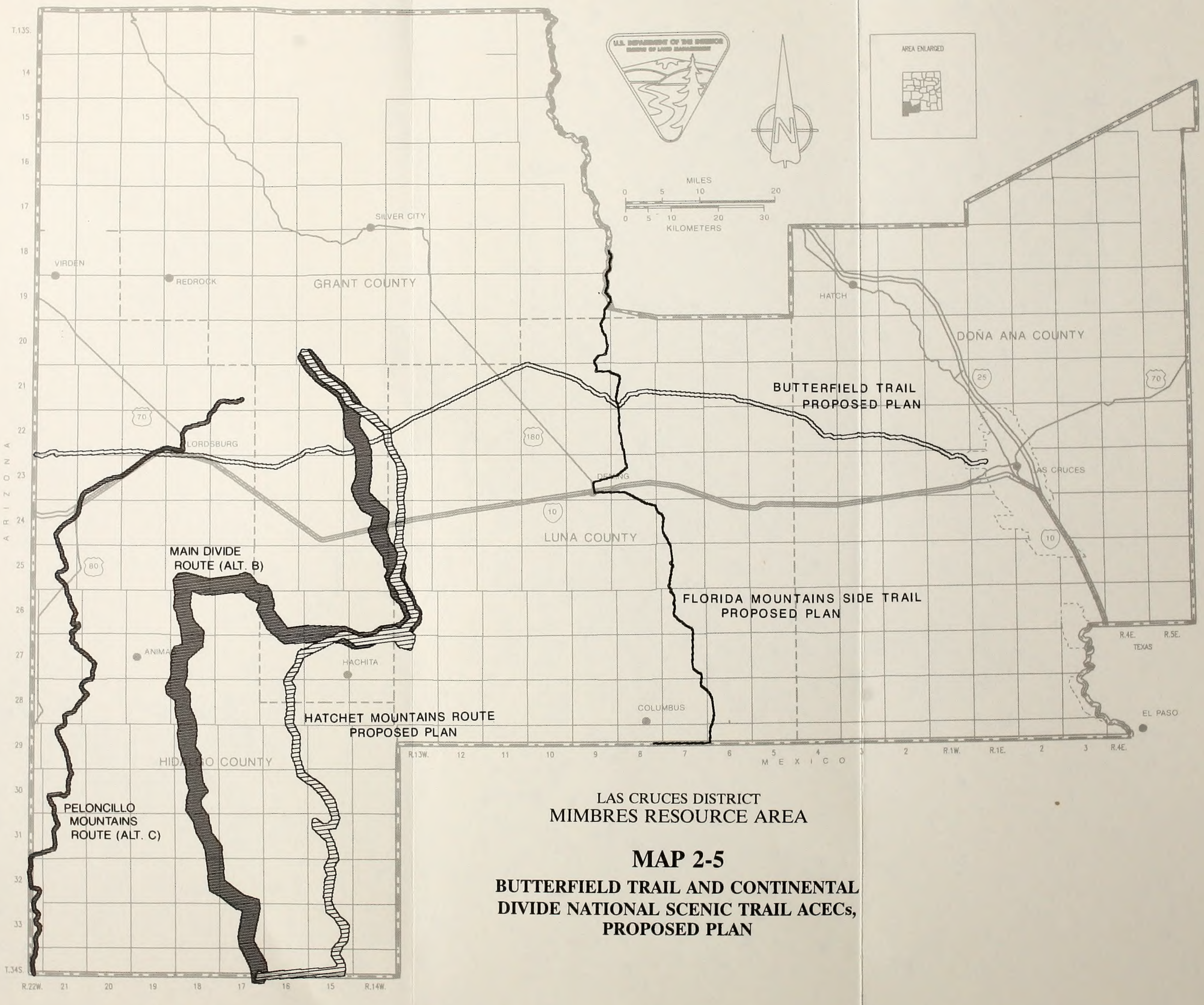
LAS CRUCES DISTRICT
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

MAP 2-4
AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN, RESEARCH NATURAL AREAS, AND NATIONAL NATURAL LANDMARK PROPOSED PLAN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BUTTERFIELD TRAIL
PROPOSED PLAN
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LORDSBURG
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MAIN DIVIDE
ROUTE (ALT. B)
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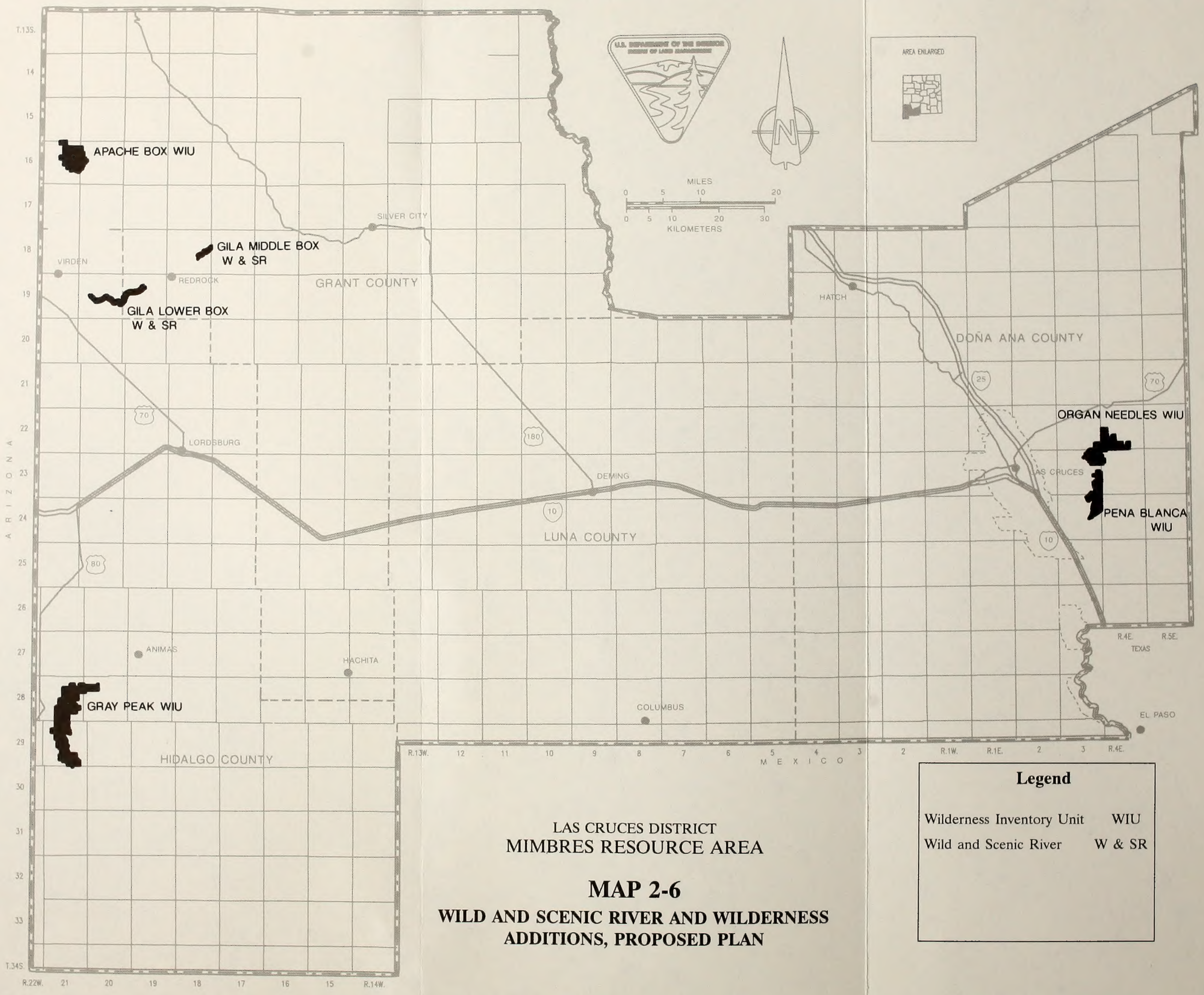
FLORIDA MOUNTAINS SIDE TRAIL
PROPOSED PLAN
ANIMAS
HACHITA
COLUMBUS
HATCHET MOUNTAINS ROUTE
PROPOSED PLAN
HIDALGO COUNTY
PELONCILLO
MOUNTAINS
ROUTE (ALT. C)

LAS CRUCES DISTRICT
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

MAP 2-5

BUTTERFIELD TRAIL AND CONTINENTAL DIVIDE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL ACECs, PROPOSED PLAN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LAS CRUCES DISTRICT
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

MAP 2-6

WILD AND SCENIC RIVER AND WILDERNESS ADDITIONS, PROPOSED PLAN

Legend

Wilderness Inventory Unit	WIU
Wild and Scenic River	W & SR

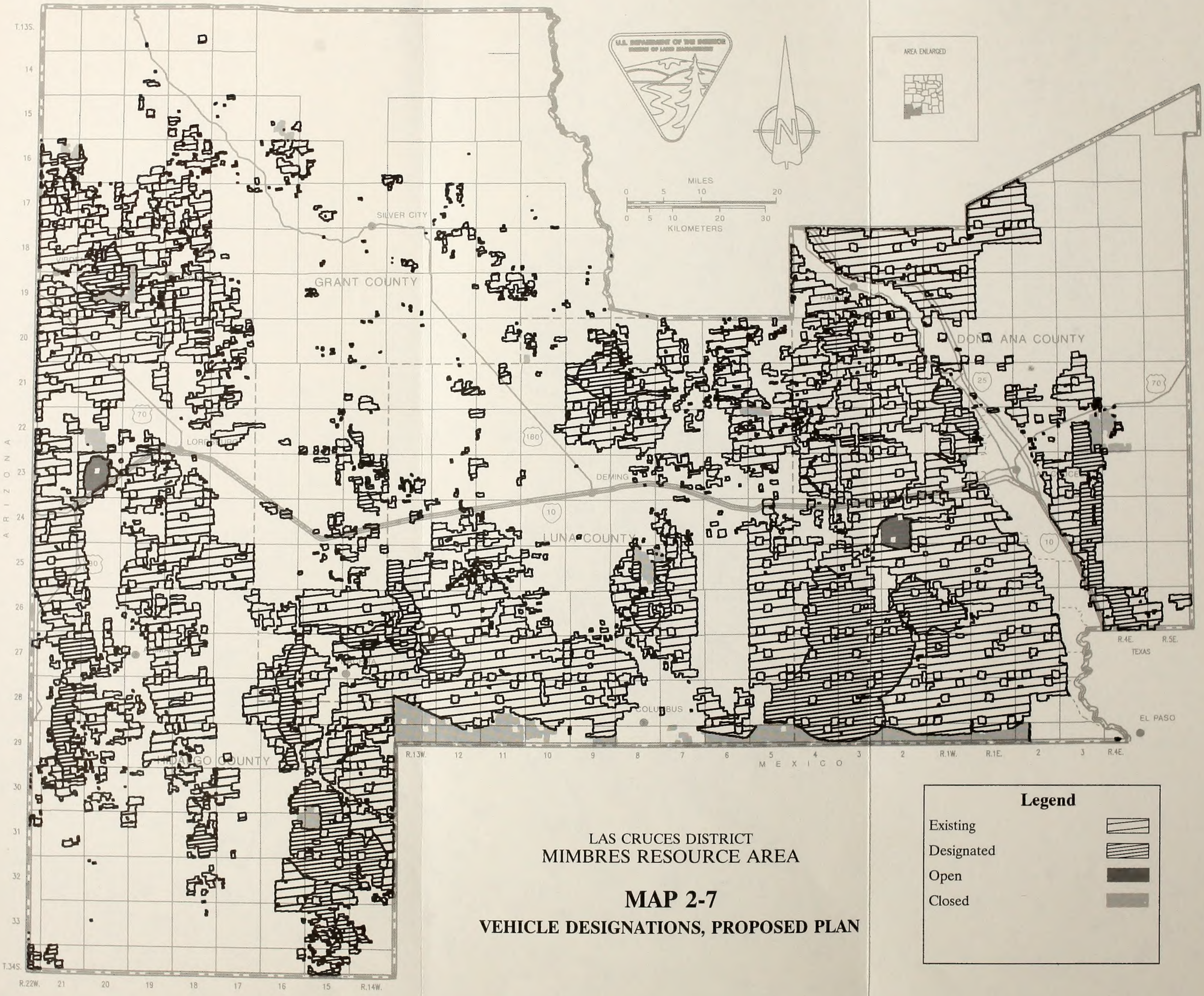


TABLE 2-15
ACECs - PROPOSED PLAN

ACEC	ACRES	VALUES
Alamo Hueco Mountains	**13,020**	B,S,C,P,SS
Apache Box	2,630	B,S,C,SS,RIP
Bear Creek	1,480	RIP
Big Hatchet Mountains	**29,180**	B,S,SS
Central Peloncillo Mountains	12,750	B,S,RES,SS
Cooke's Range	**17,160**	B,S,C,H
Cowboy Spring	6,740	B,SS
Doña Ana Mountains	1,490	B,S,C
Florida Mountains	**15,660**	**S,B**
Gila Lower Box	6,490	SS,RIP
Gila Middle Box	840	SS,RIP
Granite Gap	1,750	B,S,SS
Guadalupe Canyon	4,170	B,SS,RIP
Los Tules	20	C
Northern Peloncillo Mountains	760	B,SS
Old Town	320	C
Organ/Franklin Mountains	56,480	B,S,C,SS,RIP
Rincon	840	C
Robledo Mountains	**9,190**	B,S
San Diego Mountain	640	C
Uvas Valley	1,600	B
TOTAL ACRES	**183,180**	

Source: BLM Files, 1990.

Notes: B = Biological; S = Scenic; G = Geological; RES = Research; C = Cultural;
P = Paleontological; SS = Special Status Species; RIP = Riparian;
H = Historical

All other areas would be limited to existing roads and trails for vehicle use. **EXISTING ROADS AND TRAILS ARE DEFINED AS THOSE IN EXISTENCE AT THE TIME OF THE DESIGNATION.**

ANY ROADS OR TRAILS CREATED BY THE PASSAGE OF VEHICLES AFTER THIS DATE WOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED OPEN AND WOULD BE SUBJECT TO CLOSURE.

Exceptions to the vehicle designations may be permitted in writing. Exceptions would be made for public health and safety such as law enforcement and search and rescue, especially along the **INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY.** Exceptions for mining operations would be addressed in Plan of Operations, notices, permits, and sales. Exceptions would be made for livestock grazing permittees for emergencies such as emergency feeding, rescue of sick livestock, and emergency fence repairs along the **INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY.** Notice would be required **TO THE BLM FROM THE USER** within 2 working days **AFTER** such use. The Border Patrol would be notified immediately for fence repairs along the **INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY.** Other exceptions may be permitted in writing for activities such as fence repairs and dirt tank maintenance.

4. Access

Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, access would be developed to 19 areas by building new roads, land ownership adjustment, **OR** easement acquisition. Emphasis would be on vehicular or pedestrian access depending on the area and resource conflicts. **TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, DEVELOPMENT OF ACCESS WOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED WITH THE COOPERATION OF ADJACENT LANDOWNERS AND PERMITTEES.** The areas are shown on Map 2-8 and are listed below (the numbers in parentheses are referenced on the map):

Alamo Hueco Mountains (24) - Acquire legal public access for vehicular use to the north boundary of the WSA/ACEC.

Animas Mountains (14) - Acquire legal public access for vehicular use to the boundary of Cowboy Spring WSA/ACEC and to the Gillespie Peak area. Develop physical access for vehicular use to the north end of Animas Mountains from State Road 9.

Apache Box (1) - Acquire legal public access to the boundary (gate).

Bear Creek (2) - Acquire administrative access.

Big Hatchets (23) - Acquire legal public access for vehicular use to the north, east, and west boundaries of the WSA/ACEC (Chaney, Thompson, and Sheridan Canyons).

Burro Mountains (6) - Acquire legal public access for vehicular use (north and south of Gila River).

Cedar Mountains (20) - Acquire legal public access for vehicular use to the boundary of the WSA/ACEC on the north and west sides.

Community Pit No. 1 (36) - Acquire legal access from Shalem Colony Road to public land (approximately ½ mile).

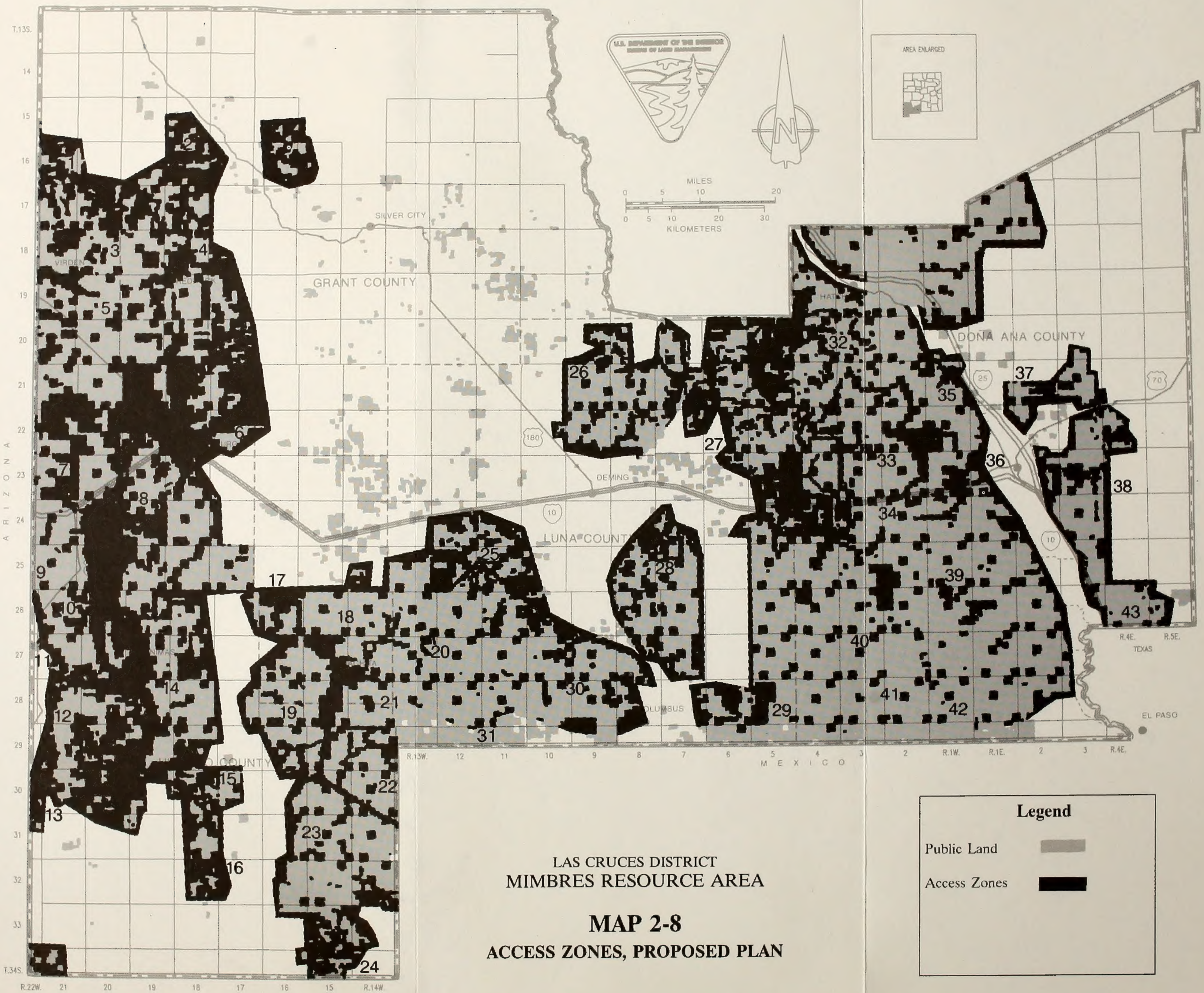
Cooke's Peak (26) - Acquire legal public access for vehicular use on east side (Hadley Draw) and west side (north of Provinger Canyon).

Florida Mountains (28) - Acquire legal public access for vehicular use to the boundary of the WSA/ACEC on the south, east, and west sides (Copper Kettle Canyon, Byer's Spring, and Mahoney Canyon).

Gila Lower Box (5) - Acquire legal public access for vehicular use to the mouth of Nichol's Canyon, Fisherman's Point, and north side.

Gila Middle Box (4) - Acquire legal public access to the boundary on **UPSTREAM OR** downstream side.

Little Hatchets (19) - Acquire legal public access for vehicular access on the **EAST AND**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Legend
Public Land
Access Zones

LAS CRUCES DISTRICT
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

MAP 2-8

ACCESS ZONES, PROPOSED PLAN

WEST SIDES (TO MAINTAIN PRESENT PHYSICAL ACCESS).

Organ Mountains (38) - Acquire legal public access for vehicular use south of Soledad Canyon through Anderson, Price, et al.

Peloncillo Mountains (13) - Acquire legal public access for vehicular use to the mouth of Owl Canyon (west side) and north of I-10.

Pyramids (8) - Acquire legal public access for vehicular use into Rockhouse Canyon and southeast part of the Pyramids.

Robledo Mountains (35) - Acquire legal public access across private land for vehicular use on the north end (via Fred Huff Road or Faulkner Canyon).

San Simon Cienega (9) - Acquire legal public access to north end.

West Potrillo Mountains (40) - Acquire legal public access to north and west sides.

The following criteria would guide prioritization of the areas for access development:

- Public demand
- Administrative needs
- Resource values/conflicts
- Availability of existing access

SPECIFIC ACCESS ROUTES OR METHODS OF DEVELOPING ACCESS WOULD BE IDENTIFIED IN THE ROUTE ANALYSIS WHICH WOULD BE COMPLETED FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL AREA AFTER APPROVAL OF THE RMP. THIS PROCESS WOULD BE COORDINATED WITH ADJACENT LANDOWNERS AND PERMITTEES.

PRIOR TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACCESS INTO ANY OF THE ABOVE AREAS, A SIGNING AND PATROL PLAN WILL BE DEVELOPED TO ADDRESS POTENTIAL PROBLEMS RELATED TO TRESPASS ONTO PRIVATE LAND, LITTERING, AND VANDALISM.

MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

1. ROWs

Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN,** ROW exclusion areas would be established for 264,870 acres and avoidance areas would be established for 783,400 acres. (See Glossary for definitions of ROW exclusion areas and ROW avoidance areas.) ROW exclusion areas would be all ACECs, **RNAs, AND NNL.** ROW avoidance areas would be the following:

- Continental Divide National Scenic Trail
- Butterfield Trail
- Bighorn sheep areas
- VRM Class II areas

The remainder of the Resource Area would be open to the location of ROWs, subject to standard stipulations (1,970,180 acres). Map 2-9 shows the location of the ROW exclusion and avoidance areas.

The BLM would encourage new facilities to be located near existing sites or in existing corridors. For existing corridors within ROW exclusion areas, existing uses would be grandfathered and new uses allowed only within existing corridors.

The following special stipulations would apply **TO NEW FACILITIES** within avoidance areas under Alternative D:

- Facilities would not be located parallel to the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail or Butterfield Trail within avoidance areas.
- Facilities would not be located within ¼ mile of any stage station on the Butterfield Trail.
- Facilities would not be located in riparian areas.
- Access routes would be limited and considered on a case-by-case basis. In some cases, construction and maintenance activities would need to be done aerially.

NEW LINEAR ROWS THAT TERMINATE ON PRIVATE INHOLDINGS WITHIN AN EXCLUSION AREA MAY BE AUTHORIZED WITHIN AN EXCLUSION AREA IF NO OTHER REASONABLE ALTERNATIVE EXISTS. SPECIAL STIPULATIONS FOR AVOIDANCE AREAS WOULD ALSO APPLY TO THESE AUTHORIZATIONS. EXISTING ROWS WITHIN EXCLUSION AREAS ARE RECOGNIZED AS GRANDFATHERED AND OPERATION, MAINTENANCE, AND RENEWAL OF THESE FACILITIES WOULD BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE ROW GRANT.

2. Minerals

Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, the following areas, totalling 64,000 acres, would be **PETITIONED FOR WITHDRAWAL** from locatable mineral entry (see Map 2-**10**):

- Apache Box ACEC
- Guadalupe Canyon ACEC
- Organ/Franklin Mountains ACEC
- Paleozoic Trackways **RNA**

The remainder of the Resource Area would be open to locatable mineral entry, subject to standard mitigating measures.

Under this alternative, all ACECs, **RNAs AND NNL** and the Butterfield and Continental Divide National Scenic Trails would be closed to mineral material disposal (331,950 acres). See Map 2-**11**. The remainder of the Resource Area would be open to mineral material disposal, subject to standard stipulations. A competitive sale program would be established; the site(s) would be determined later based on mineral surveys and would probably be within 10 miles of Las Cruces. Miscellaneous negotiated sales would be continued.

Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, 266,950 acres would be closed to fluid mineral leasing (see Map 2-**11**). This would include all ACECs, **RNAs, AND NNL**, in addition to the existing closed areas. The current stipulations for fluid mineral leasing would continue (274,000 acres). About 65,000 acres would be open to leasing with no surface occupancy. The remainder of the Resource Area would be open to mineral leasing, subject to standard terms and conditions: oil and gas, 3,532,300 acres; and geothermal and nonenergy leasables, 3,499,500 acres.

The following mitigating measures would be applied to lands open to locatable (under Plan of Operations only), saleable, or leasable mineral entry:

- Riparian areas would not be disturbed.

- Activities on critical soils on slopes over 20 percent would require special mitigation.

3. Recreation

Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, the following new SRMAs would be designated (see Map 2-**12**):

- Doña Ana Mountains
- Fort Cummings

A RECREATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN (RAMP) would be prepared for the Doña Ana Mountains SRMA. The Fort Cummings SRMA would be managed in accordance with the existing Cultural Resource Management Plan.

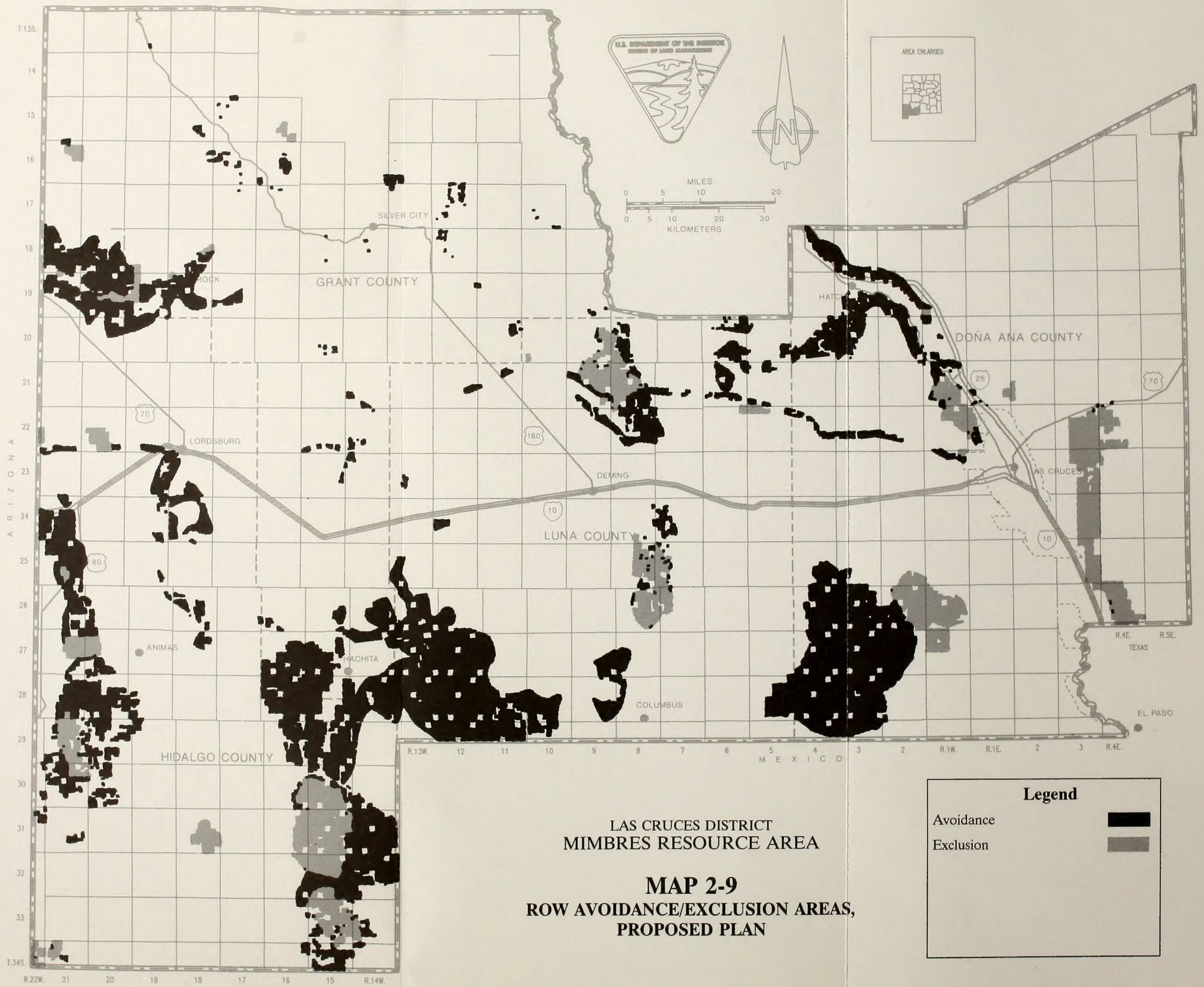
Management of the two existing SRMAs would continue. The Organ Mountains SRMA would continue to be managed in accordance with the Organ Mountains Coordinated Resource Management Plan and the Gila Lower Box SRMA would continue to be managed in accordance with the Gila River Coordinated Resource Management Plan.

The focus of interpretive and educational efforts would be on ACECs or **RNAs** where this is part of the management prescription for the **AREA** (see Appendix H).

The remainder of the Resource Area would be managed primarily for dispersed recreation opportunities.

4. Cultural and Paleontological Resources

The following objectives and actions would be implemented to resolve the cultural and paleontological resources management concern: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LAS CRUCES DISTRICT

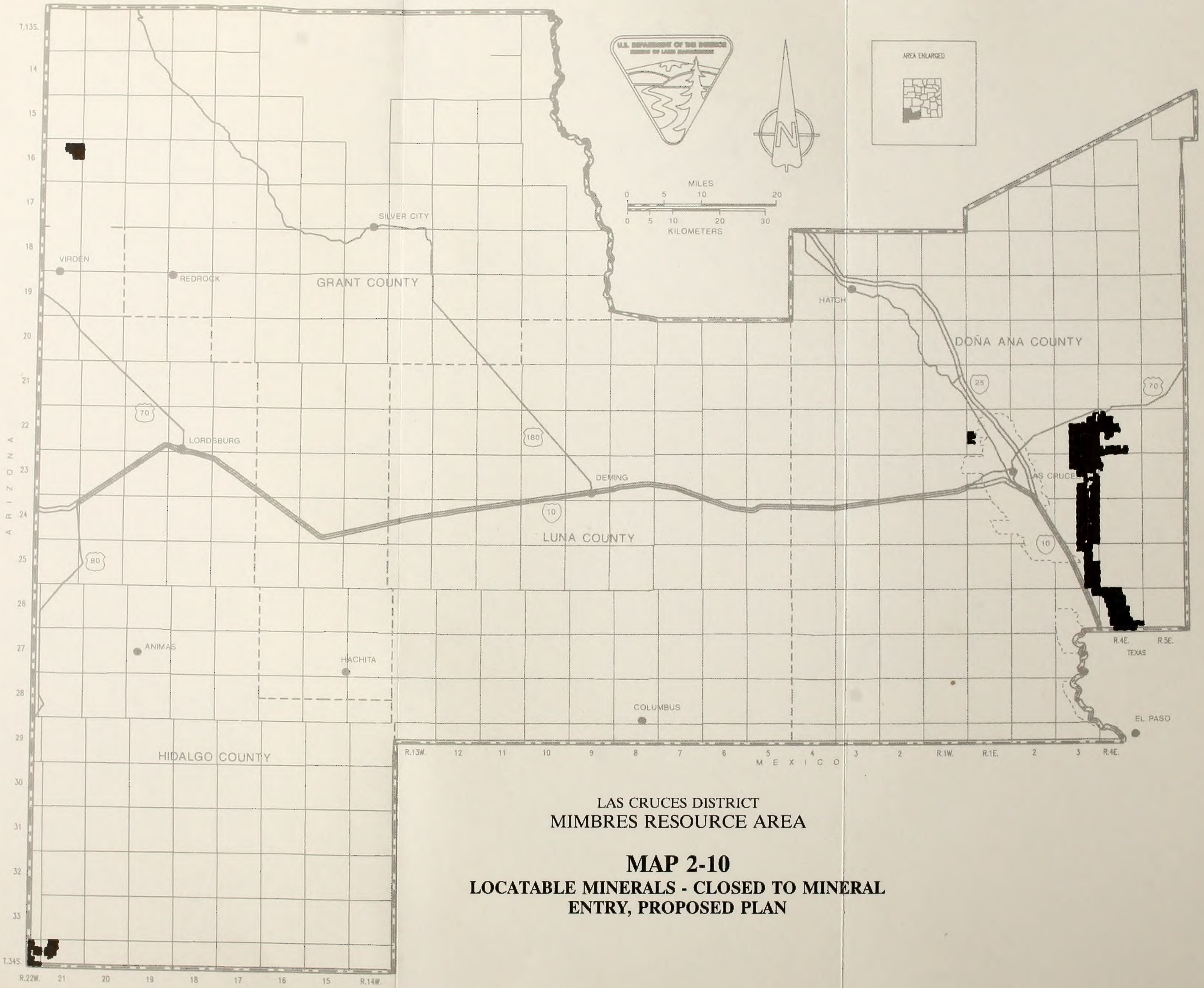
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

MAP 2-9

ROW AVOIDANCE/EXCLUSION AREAS, PROPOSED PLAN

Legend

Avoidance	■
Exclusion	▨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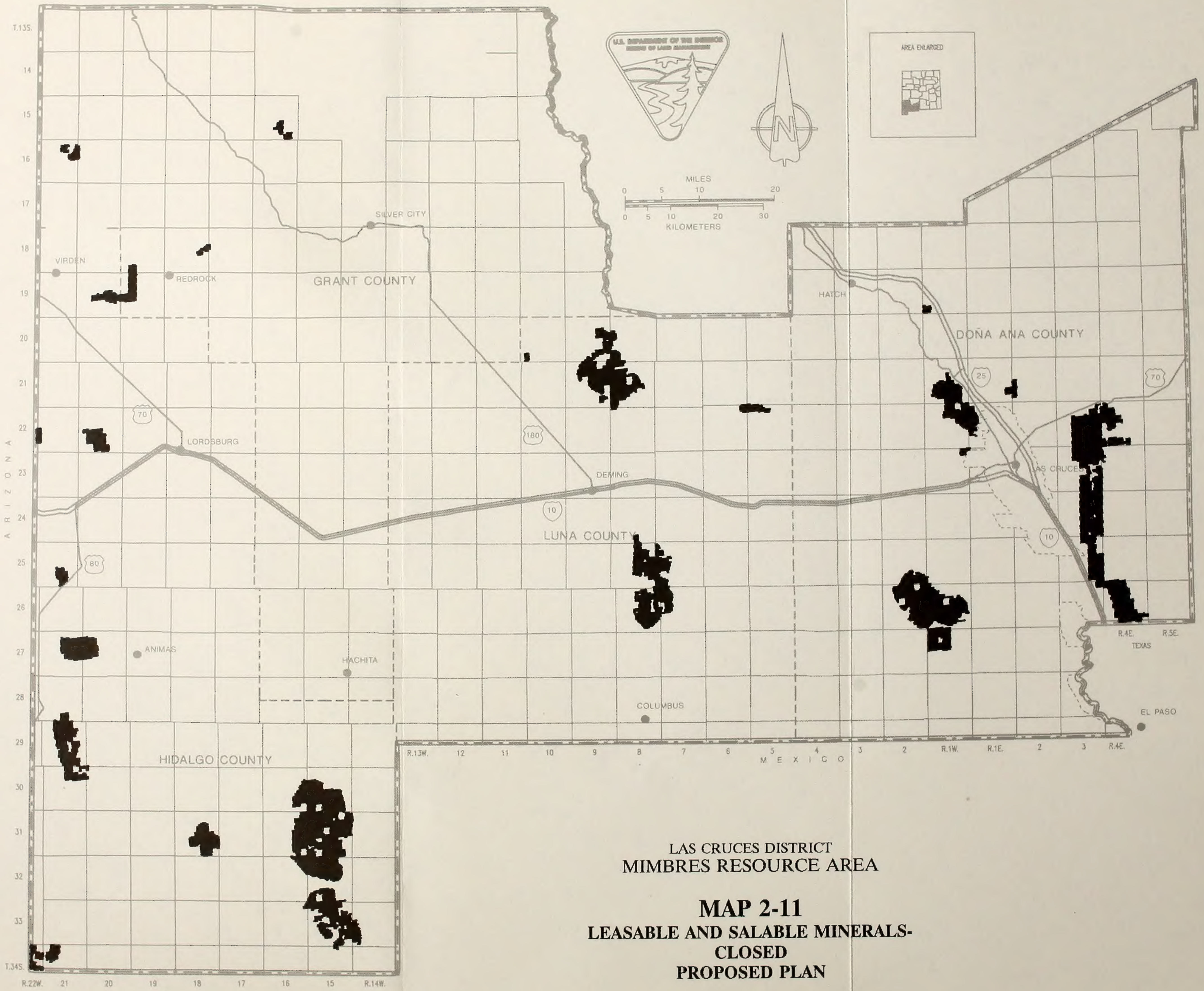
LAS CRUCES DISTRICT
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

MAP 2-10

LOCATABLE MINERALS - CLOSED TO MINERAL ENTRY, PROPOSED PLAN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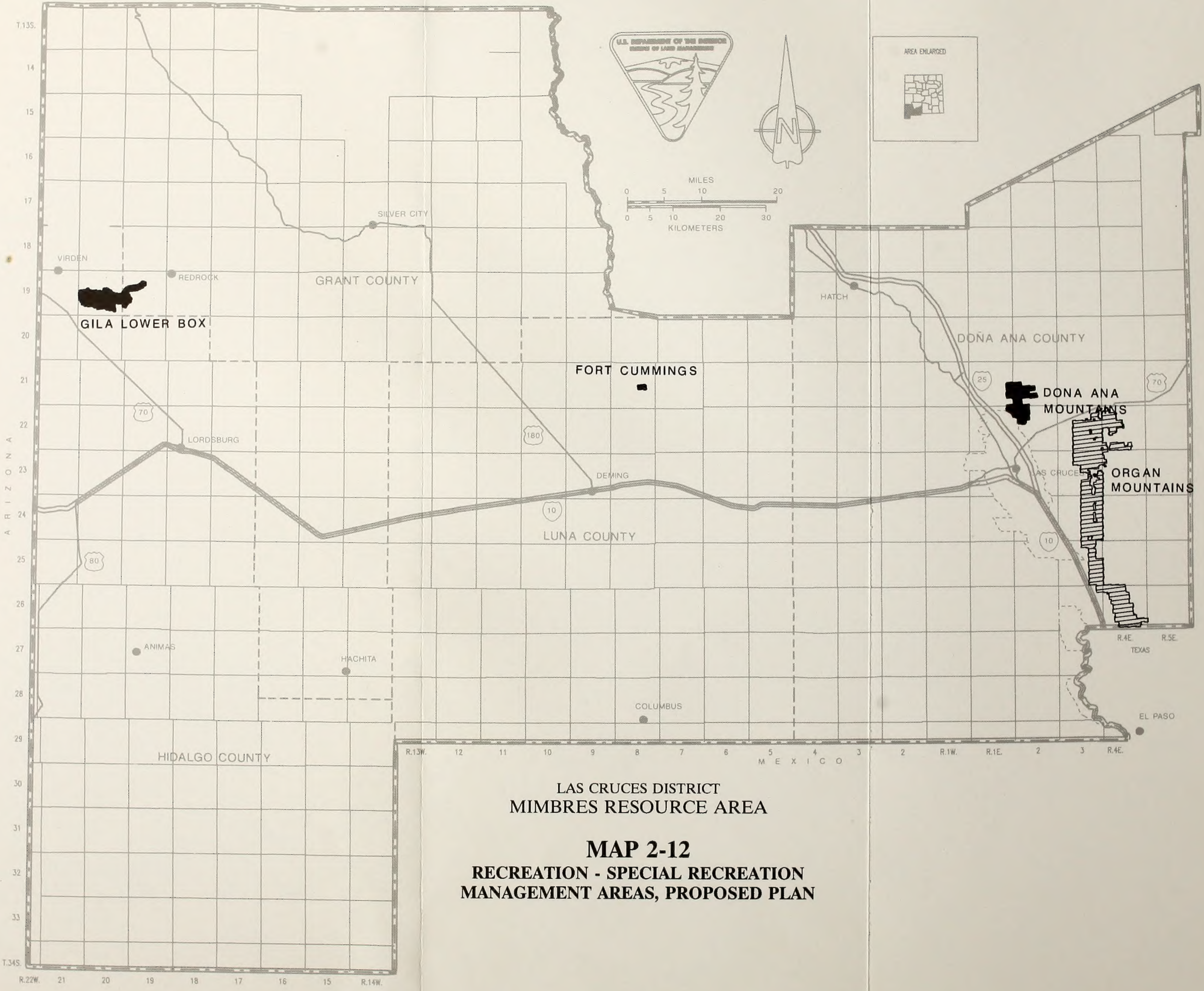
LAS CRUCES DISTRICT
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

MAP 2-11
LEASABLE AND SALABLE MINERALS-CLOSED
PROPOSED PLAN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LAS CRUCES DISTRICT

MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

MAP 2-12

RECREATION - SPECIAL RECREATION MANAGEMENT AREAS, PROPOSED PLAN

- Manage for information potential (data retrieval, research)
- Manage for public values (interpret)
- Manage for conservation (future use)

Table 2-16 identifies the actions that would be implemented to achieve each objective.

Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, the following cultural and paleontological areas would be designated as ACECs **OR RNAs** (see Issue 2, ACECs and Other SMAs):

- Alamo Hueco Mountains **ACEC**
- Apache Box **ACEC**
- Cooke's Range **ACEC**
- Doña Ana Mountains **ACEC**
- Los Tules **ACEC**
- Old Town **ACEC**
- Organ/Franklin Mountains **ACEC**
- Paleozoic Trackways **RNA**
- Rincon **ACEC**
- Robledo Mountains **ACEC**
- San Diego Mountain **ACEC**

EACH AREA would be managed in accordance with the management prescriptions listed in Appendix H. Interpretation for tourism would be provided at Fort Cummings (Cooke's Range ACEC), the Massacre Peak Petroglyphs (Cooke's Range ACEC), and the Paleozoic Trackways **RNA**, with emphasis on passive interpretation such as signing.

The Butterfield Trail (15,690 acres) would be designated as **AN** historic trail and managed for its historical resource values (see Issue 2, ACECs and Other SMAs). Interpretation for tourism would be provided at the Butterfield Trail stage stops, with emphasis on facilities for interpretation.

Site management in the Organ Mountains (Organ/Franklin Mountains ACEC), at Fort Cummings (Cooke's Range ACEC), and along the Butterfield Trail would continue in accordance with the existing Coordinated or Cultural Resource Management Plans for those areas.

5. Wildlife Habitat

Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, new HMPs would be developed in the Columbus area, the Cooke's Range/Nutt area, the Robledo Mountains, the Uvas Mountains, the Cedar Mountains, and the West Potrillo Mountains (see Map 2-13). Table 2-**17** lists these areas with the priority species, objectives, population goals, and actions. Management of existing HMPs would continue.

IT IS INTENDED THAT POPULATION GOALS CAN BE REACHED WITHOUT REDUCTION OF LIVESTOCK NUMBERS (THROUGH GRAZING MANAGEMENT AND LAND TREATMENTS.) POPULATION GOALS MAY BE REVISED AS NECESSARY THROUGH THE HMP MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROCESS.

All HMPs would incorporate the following:

- Obtain production (population) data to correlate with monitoring (at a minimum, harvest information by area)
- Monitoring emphasis would be on preferred habitats for wildlife
- Monitoring would incorporate browse utilization/condition/trend

Animal damage control (ADC) actions would be conducted in accordance with annual ADC plans. The plan would consider SMAs (such as WSAs, ACECs) specifying times and conditions for control activities in accordance with management prescriptions, objectives, and goals for each area.

6. Soil, Air, and Water

The objective of the watershed management program would be to reduce soil erosion and improve water quality (nonpoint source pollution), with emphasis on critical soil areas. Critical soils on 0-10 percent slopes would be first priority for land treatments and grazing management to reduce erosion and improve water quality. Critical soils on slopes over 10 percent would be **A** priority for grazing management to reduce erosion and improve water quality.

PROPOSED PLAN

Watershed management plans would be developed for the following areas:

- Starvation/China Draw (southeast side of Cooke's Range)
- **NORTH SIDE OF CEDAR MOUNTAINS**
- Alamo Hueco/Big Hatchet Mountains (east side)
- Corralitos
- Gila River (Virden to Middle Box, north and south; would include provisions of existing Gila River Coordinated Resource Management Plan)
- Rincon/Hatch (both sides of river)
- Pyramids
- Uvas Valley

The criteria for identification of the areas include nonpoint source impaired watersheds, vegetation, slope, and critical soils. The locations of the areas are shown on Map 2-**14**.

The focus for management of air quality and efforts to secure guaranteed instream flow would be in ACECs where this is part of the management prescription for the ACEC (see Appendix H-1).

Provisions for erosion control and air quality protection would continue to be incorporated into all surface-disturbing actions.

7. Vegetation

Vegetation Sale Areas

The existing sale areas would be retained **UNTIL THE SUPPLY OF PLANTS IS EXHAUSTED** and **THEN EXPANDED** into adjacent lands identified for disposal. A new sale area would be developed between Deming and Lordsburg.

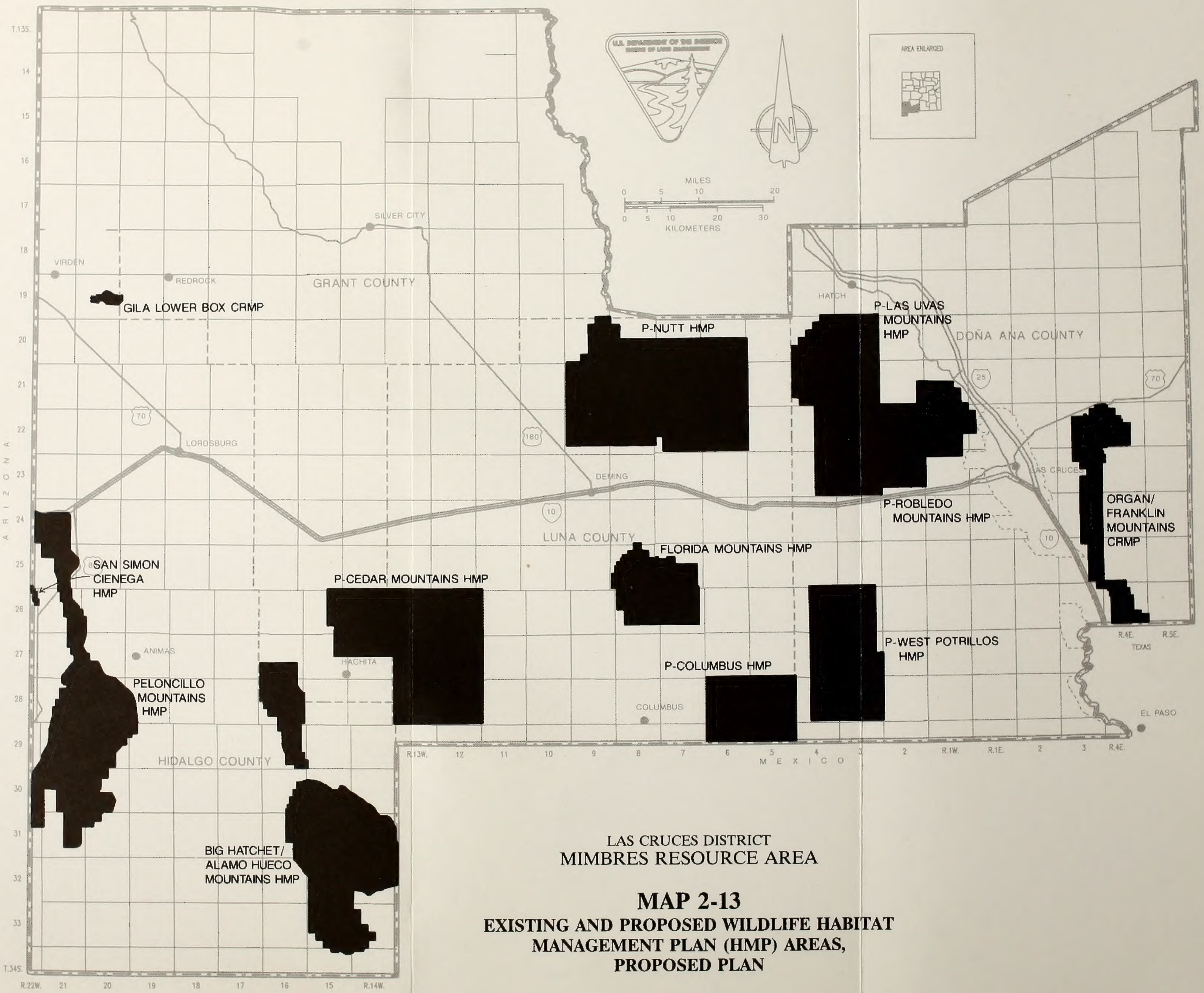
Desired Plant Communities

The desired plant community concept is defined as a plant community that produces the kind, proportion, and amount of vegetation necessary for meeting or exceeding the land use plan goals and activity plan objectives established for the site. The desired plant community becomes the vegetation management objective for the site. The desired plant community must be consistent with the site's capability to produce the identified community through land treatments such as prescribed fire and chemical brush control and prescribed grazing management. **UNDER THE PROPOSED PLAN, GRAZING SYSTEMS WOULD BE DEVELOPED USING FORAGE UTILIZATION CRITERIA FOR IMPORTANT FORAGE SPECIES AS OUTLINED IN APPENDIX C-3. FLEXIBILITY WOULD BE PROVIDED FOR PERMITTEES AND LESSEES TO DEVIATE FROM THESE CRITERIA WHERE SPECIFIED IN ALLOTMENT-SPECIFIC PLANS WHICH PRESCRIBE DIFFERENT USE LEVELS OR DIFFERENT MEANS OF EVALUATING ALLOTMENT OBJECTIVES.**

TABLE 2-18 CONTAINS THE DESIRED PLANT COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES FOR MAJOR VEGETATION TYPES IN THE RESOURCE AREA. APPENDIX D CONTAINS A MORE DETAILED DISCUSSION OF THE DESIRED PLANT COMMUNITY CONCEPT. MAPS SHOWING DESIRED PLANT COMMUNITIES ARE ALSO AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW IN THE MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA OFFICE.

Land Treatments

Grass upland areas would be treated mainly through prescribed grazing management (grazing systems). Grass bottomlands, mixed desert shrub (>10 percent slope), snakeweed, and mountain brush types would be treated using combinations of prescribed burning, prescribed natural fire, and prescribed grazing management. Creosotebush, mesquite, and mixed desert shrub (<10 percent slope) would be treated almost entirely by the use of chemical herbicides such as pelleted Tebuthiuron. Usually only areas 2 sections in size or greater (1,240 acres) would be treated. Areas over 10 percent slope and within ½ **MILE** of a perennial stream would not be treated chemically. The use of chemical treatments is presently excluded on the following range sites: bottomland, draw, clay, salt flats, salty bottomland, igneous hills, limestone hills, malpais, and breaks. These are **USUALLY** found in low-lying areas **WITH HEAVIER SOILS** or in areas over 10 percent slope. **THE ABOVE CRITERIA MAY CHANGE AS NEW CHEMICALS BECOME AVAILABLE.** Prescribed fire or prescribed grazing management would be used to maintain these areas to the extent possible. Fire suppression would play a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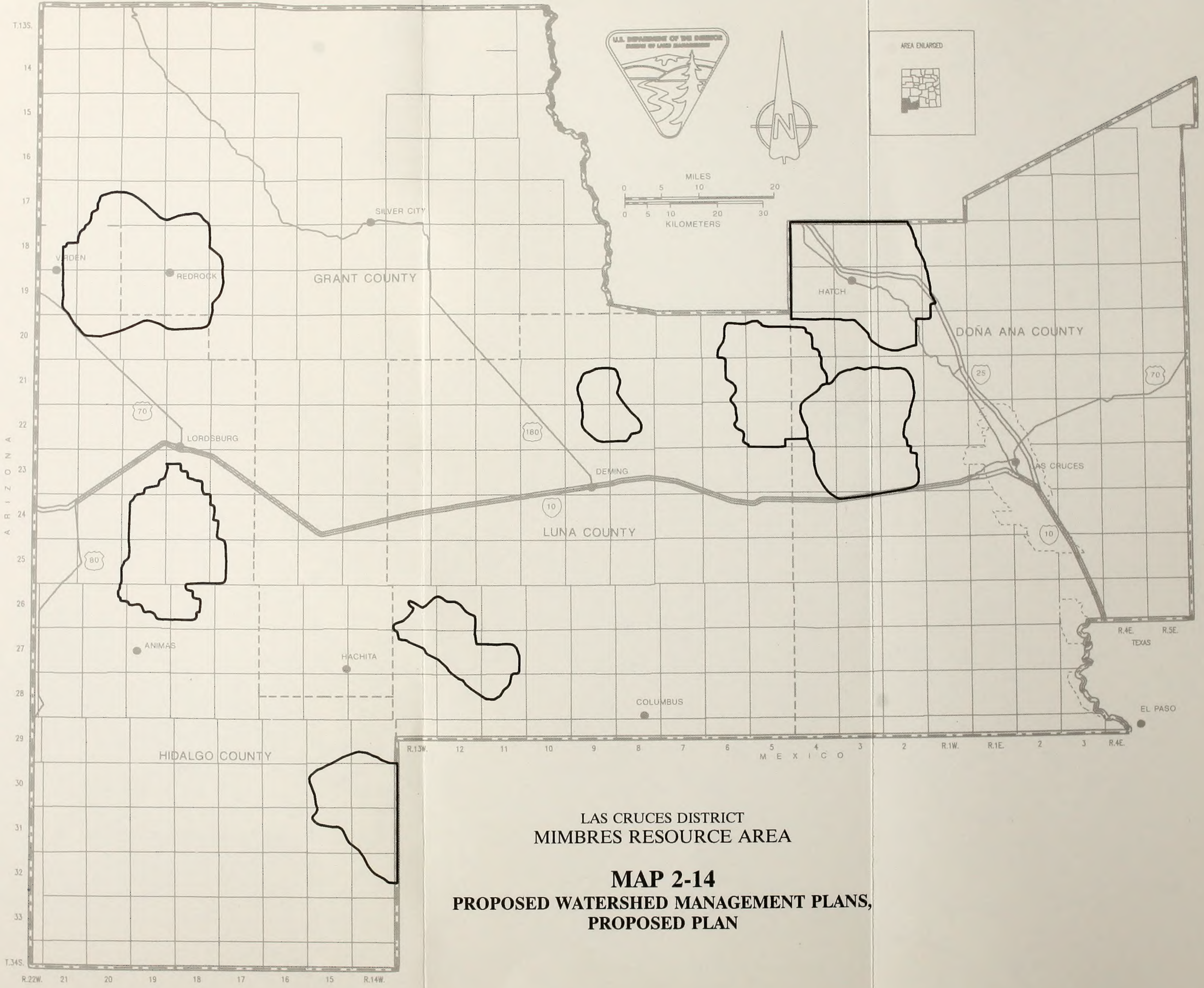
LAS CRUCES DISTRICT
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

MAP 2-13

EXISTING AND PROPOSED WILDLIFE HABITAT MANAGEMENT PLAN (HMP) AREAS, PROPOSED PLAN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LAS CRUCES DISTRICT
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

MAP 2-14

PROPOSED WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLANS, PROPOSED PLAN

TABLE 2-**16**
MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED BY PLANNED ACTIONS
PROPOSED PLAN

ACTIONS	INFORMATION	PUBLIC VALUES	CONSERVATION
Eliminate livestock grazing (Old Town, Fort Cummings, and Dripping Springs Natural Area in accordance with Cultural Resource Management Plans and ACEC management prescriptions).		X	
Class III inventories (Fort Cummings, San Diego Mountain, Pony Hills, and Rincon ACECs).	X	X	
Research historic trails and roads (Camino Real, Santa Rita Copper Trail, Spanish exploration routes, and historic wagon roads).	X	X	
Research historic mining features (Town of Cooke, Jose, Stephenson-Bennett, Modoc, Tres Hermanas, Pyramids, Pinos Altos, Peloncillos, Floridas, Town of Carlise/Summit).	X	X	
Research/field schools (Old Town, Bruton Bead, Indian Basin, East Potrillo, South Florida, Camp Cody sites).	X	X	
Restrict public access to the following rockshelters: Apache Box, Apache Cave, Stein's Cave and elsewhere as needed.	X		X
Acquire Butterfield Trail stage stations	X	X	
Manage Old Town/Pony Hills sites in accordance with Mimbres Culture **NATIONAL MONUMENT** legislation if it is passed.	X	X	X
Close road to Bruton Bead site.	X		X
Fence/cover with sterile fill the Los Tules site.			X
Transfer BLM portion of Redrock cemetery to NPS **(ONLY IF THEY ACQUIRE PRIVATE LAND PORTION)**.	X	X	
Implement provisions of Paleozoic Trackways Study legislation.	X	X	
Encourage paleontological studies of Robledo Mountains, Aden Lava Flow, and Alamo Hueco Mountains.	X	X	

Source: BLM Files, 1990.

TABLE 2-17
WILDLIFE HMPs
PROPOSED PLAN

HMP AREA	PRIORITY SPECIES	OBJECTIVES	POPULATION GOALS (MINIMUM)	ACTIONS
Columbus	Antelope[a]	Transplant/ introduce	50	Fence modification. Reserve 50 AUMs forage.
Cooke's Range/Nutt	Deer/Antelope[a]	Deer; improve habitat Antelope: transplant/introduce	Deer: 400 Antelope: 100	Fence modification. Water development. Prescribed burning.
Robledo Mountains	Deer/Antelope[a] **UPLAND GAME**	Deer: improve habitat Antelope: transplant/introduce **UPLAND GAME; IMPROVE AND ENHANCE HABITAT**	Deer: 400 Antelope: 50	Fence modification. Water development.
Las Uvas Mountains	Deer	Improve habitat	300	Water development.
Cedar Mountains	Deer/Antelope[a] **UPLAND GAME**	Deer: improve habitat Antelope: transplant/introduce **UPLAND GAME: IMPROVE AND ENHANCE HABITAT**	Deer: 300 Antelope: 100	Fence modification. Water development.
West Potrillo Mountains	Deer/**UPLAND GAME**	Deer: improve habitat **UPLAND GAME: IMPROVE AND ENHANCE HABITAT**	Deer: 300	Water development. Exclosures near water.
Organ/Franklin Mountains[b]	Deer/Bighorn		Deer: 500 Bighorn: 100	Prescribed burning. Water development.
Florida Mountains[b]	Deer/**IBEX** **UPLAND GAME**	**UPLAND GAME: IMPROVE AND ENHANCE HABITAT**	Deer: 500 Ibex: 400	Prescribed burning. Water development.
Big Hatchet/Alamo Hueco Mountains[b]	Bighorn/Deer **UPLAND GAME**	**UPLAND GAME:IMPROVE AND ENHANCE HABITAT**	Bighorn: **250** Deer: 500	Prescribed burning. Fence modification.
Peloncillo Mountains[b]	Bighorn/Deer		Bighorn: **250** Deer: 750	Fence modification.

Source: BLM Files, 1990, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, 1990.

Notes: [a] Antelope objectives and goals contingent on habitat inventory.
[b] Existing HMP. **POPULATION GOALS FOR THESE HMPs WERE ESTABLISHED AT THE TIME THE HMPs WERE DEVELOPED.**

major role in maintaining pinyon-juniper, oak woodland, and conifer types, except where prescribed natural fires may benefit these areas (such as low intensity ground fires where scorch heights are low enough to prevent damage to trees). Table 2-**19** summarizes land treatments for specific plant communities. See Maps 2-**15 AND 2-16**.

All areas treated by prescribed burning, prescribed natural fire or chemical herbicides would be rested from grazing for at least **TWO** growing seasons in areas where livestock use occurs. Exceptions would be in grass bottomlands where grazing would be allowed after 4 inches of regrowth **OR AS OTHERWISE AUTHORIZED.** Any increase in forage would be reserved for livestock, wildlife, and watershed in accordance with management goals, objectives, and prescriptions for wildlife HMPs, livestock AMPs or **OTHER** grazing activity plans, and watershed activity plans for specific areas. Prescribed burn plans and EAs would be developed for specific areas prior to the use of prescribed burning or prescribed natural fires. Treatment plans and EAs would be prepared for specific chemical treatment areas prior to herbicide application. **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS CONTAINED IN THE FINAL EIS VEGETATION TREATMENT ON BLM LANDS IN THIRTEEN WESTERN STATES (BLM 1991).**

Livestock Grazing

Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, livestock grazing would be eliminated on a total of 8,026 acres, including the Red Rock Game Farm (1,100 acres), the Central Peloncillo Mountains ACEC (4,446 acres **IN THE SCHOLES ALLOTMENT AND OWL CANYON**), the proposed Bear Creek ACEC (1,480 acres), and **PORTIONS OF** the Organ Mountains (1,000 acres). **ALL AREAS EXCEPT FOR BEAR CREEK ARE PRESENTLY EXCLUDED FROM LIVESTOCK GRAZING.**

Fragile Lands

The fragile land areas **SHOWN** on Map 2-17 would receive high priority for AMP or other activity plan revision or development, allotment monitoring, land treatments, allotment recategorization, and possible reduction or exclusion of surface disturbing activities including range improvement development and livestock grazing use. Efforts would be directed towards improving range condition and reaching desired plant community objectives within these areas. Fragile land areas within ACECs would receive the highest priority for improved management.

8. Riparian and Arroyo Habitat

Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, riparian habitat in the following areas would be included in the ACEC designations proposed under Issue 2, ACECs and Other SMAs:

- Apache Box
- Bear Creek
- Gila Lower Box
- Gila Middle Box
- Guadalupe Canyon
- Organ/Franklin Mountains

The ACECs would be managed in accordance with the management prescriptions listed in Appendix H-1.

Management of the riparian resources in the Gila Lower Box, the Organ Mountains, and the San Simon Cienega would continue in accordance with the existing management plans for those area. Instream flows for the Gila Lower and Middle Box ACECs would be secured when State law allows. The Placitas Arroyo Riparian Demonstration Area would continue as a riparian SMA.

9. Special Status Species

Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, special status species in the following areas would be included in the ACEC designations proposed under Issue 2, ACECs and Other SMAs:

- Alamo Hueco Mountains **ACEC**
- Antelope Pass **RNA**
- Apache Box **ACEC**
- Big Hatchet Mountains **ACEC**
- Central Peloncillo Mountains **ACEC**
- Gila Lower Box **ACEC**
- Gila Middle Box **ACEC**
- Granite Gap **ACEC**
- Guadalupe Canyon **ACEC**
- Northern Peloncillo Mountains **ACEC**
- Organ/Franklin Mountains **ACEC**

PROPOSED PLAN

The ACECs **AND RNA** would be managed in accordance with the management prescriptions listed in Appendix H.

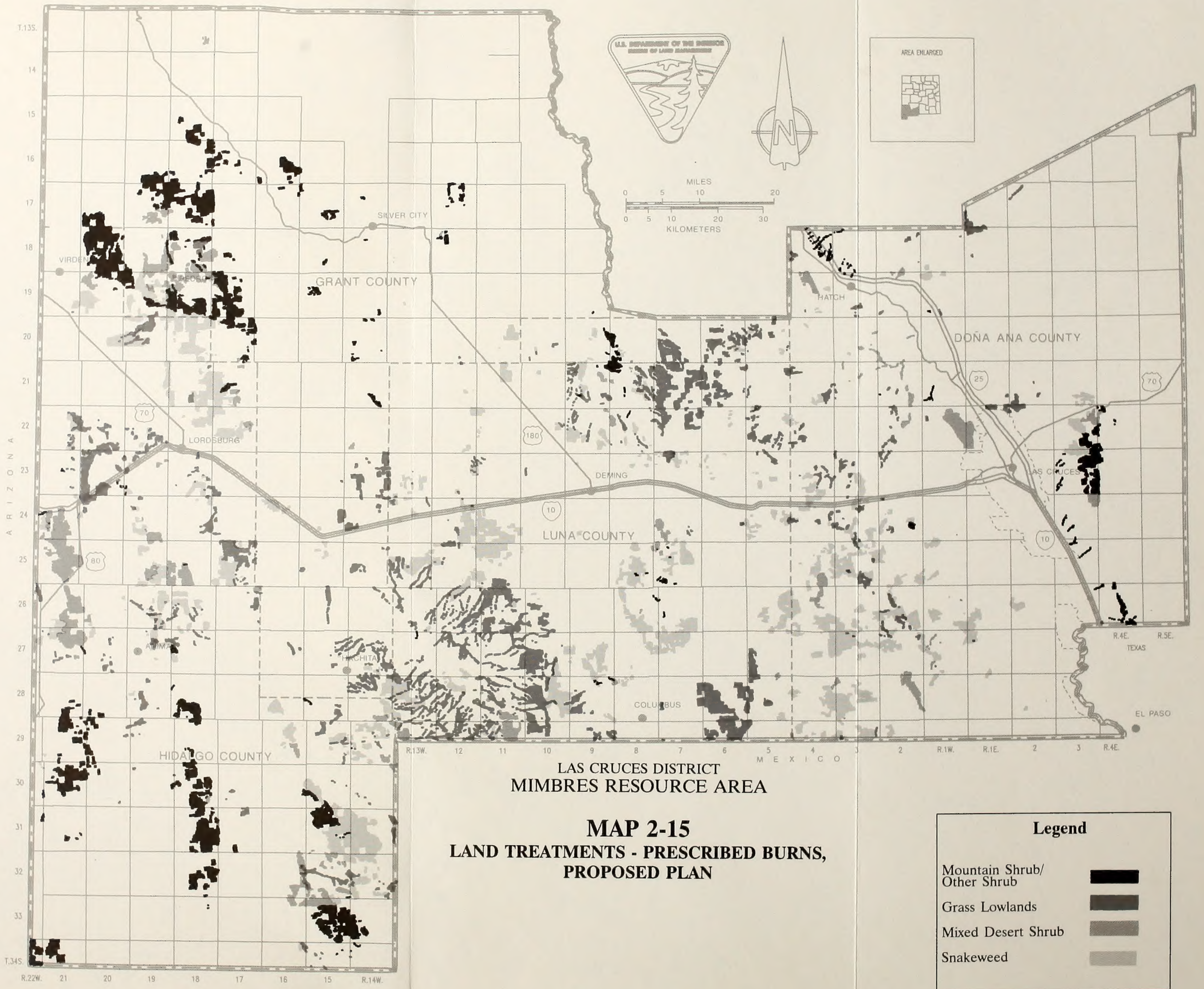
Management of special status species in the Organ Mountains would continue in accordance with the existing Organ Mountains Coordinated Resource Management Plan.

TABLE 2-**18**
DESIRED PLANT COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES[a/]
PROPOSED PLAN

PLANT COMMUNITY	% GRASS	% SHRUBS	% FORBS	ACREAGE
Creosotebush	40-60	20-30	20-30	695,240
Creosotebush[b/]	0-10	80-100	0-10	339,210
Mesquite	50-65	15-25	30-50	577,200
Mesquite[b/]	0-10	80-100	0-10	138,680
Snakeweed	60-75	10-15	10-30	438,830
Mixed Desert Shrub (<10% slope)	55-75	15-20	10-20	183,200
Mixed Desert Shrub (>10% slope)	20-30	40-60	20-30	203,940
Mountain Brush	35-55	30-40	20-30	158,630
Pinyon-Juniper/Oak Woodland/Conifer	0-30	40-70	0-30	59,350
Grass Bottomlands	70-80	10-20	10-20	571,880
Grass Uplands	65-80	20-30	15-30	696,190
Riparian	30-80 (grass or grasslike)	40-60 (woody veg)	30-60	4,600
Arroyo	0-15	40-70	18-20	21,050

Source: BLM Files, 1990.

Notes: a/ Specific species will be identified for each plant community at the activity planning level.
b/ These brush types would remain unchanged because they fall in the buffered area along perennial streams or are above the 0-10 percent slope contour and would not be treated chemically. These areas would generally not respond positively to changes in grazing management alone.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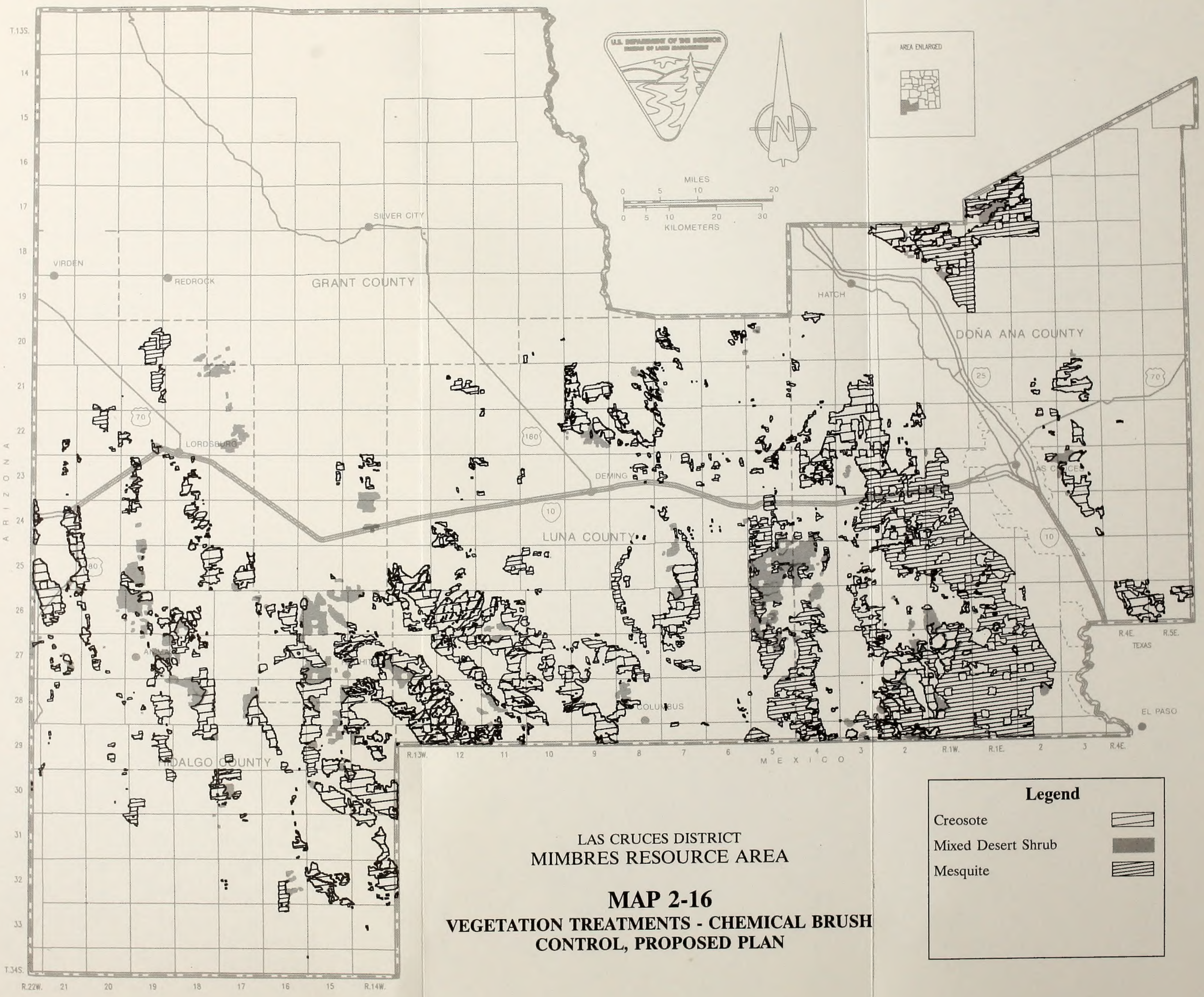
Legend
Mountain Shrub/ Other Shrub
Grass Lowlands
Mixed Desert Shrub
Snakeweed

LAS CRUCES DISTRICT
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

MAP 2-15

LAND TREATMENTS - PRESCRIBED BURNS, PROPOSED PLAN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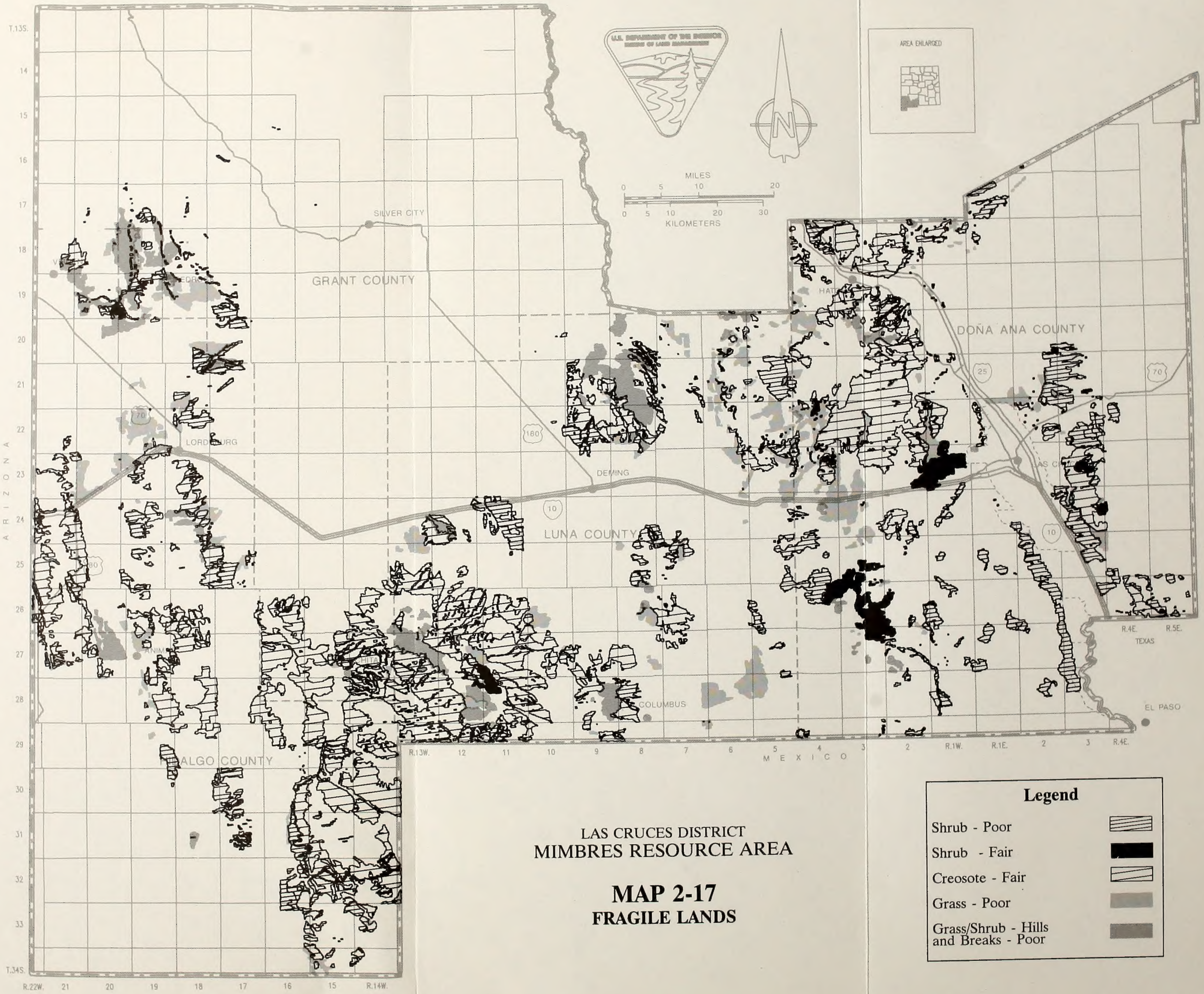
Creosote ▭
Mixed Desert Shrub ■
Mesquite ▨

LAS CRUCES DISTRICT
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

MAP 2-16
VEGETATION TREATMENTS - CHEMICAL BRUSH CONTROL, PROPOSED PLAN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LAS CRUCES DISTRICT
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

MAP 2-17
FRAGILE LANDS

Legend

Shrub - Poor	▤
Shrub - Fair	■
Creosote - Fair	▨
Grass - Poor	▒
Grass/Shrub - Hills and Breaks - Poor	▓

TABLE 2-19
LAND TREATMENTS
PROPOSED PLAN

PLANT COMMUNITY	AC. BURN	AC. CHEMICAL TREATMENT	PURPOSE
Creosotebush	N/A	533,200	Wildlife, watershed, forage production
Mesquite	N/A	425,700	Wildlife, watershed, forage production
Mixed Desert Shrub (<10% slope)	N/A	121,610	Wildlife, watershed, forage production
Mixed Desert Shrub (>10% slope)	86,830	N/A	Wildlife, watershed, forage production
Mountain Brush	141,510	N/A	Wildlife, watershed, forage production
Snakeweed	281,250	N/A	Wildlife, watershed, forage production
Grass Bottomlands	168,550	N/A	Improve plant vigor, reduce shrub invasion, increase forage and palatability
Grass Uplands	Undetermined-used as needed	N/A	Wildlife, watershed, control shrub invasion
TOTALS	677,690	1,080,530	

Source: BLM Files, 1990.

CHAPTER 3

CHAPTER 3 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes those physical, biological, social and economic characteristics of the Mimbres Resource Area which affect or are affected by the resolution of the four issues and nine management concerns identified in Chapter 2. Much of the information in this chapter summarizes more detailed material which is contained in the Management Situation Analysis (MSA) for the Mimbres Resource Area and is available for review at the Mimbres Resource Area Office. The Existing Management Situation (EMS) and the Resource Area Profile (RAP) sections of the MSA are in-depth discussions of the environment in the Mimbres Resource Area.

TOPOGRAPHY

The Mimbres Resource Area lies within the Basin and Range physiographic province. Typical landforms include rugged and steep fault-block mountain ranges, broad basins, and volcanic uplands. Major topographic features include: the Organ Mountains, Florida Mountains, West Potrillo Mountains, Big and Little Hatchet Mountains, Animas Mountains, Peloncillo Mountains, Cedar Mountains, and Cooke's Range. In contrast to these ranges are broad valleys including the Animas Valley, Playas Valley, Hachita Valley, Mesilla Bolson, and the Rio Grande/Mesilla Valley.

Elevations on BLM-administered public land range from a low of approximately 3,800 feet (1,141 m) above mean sea level in the southern Mesilla Valley to a high of 9,012 feet (2,706 m) at Organ Needle in the Organ Mountains. Average elevation is about 5,000 feet (1,501 m).

CLIMATE

The Mimbres Resource Area is characterized by an arid to semiarid continental climate, with mild winters and pleasant to hot summers. Average annual precipitation in the area ranges from 8 to 10 inches at elevations below 6,000 feet, and from 14 to 16 inches at higher elevations. A wide variation in annual totals is characteristic of arid climates as illustrated by annual extremes of 18.8 inches and 4.4 inches at Lordsburg during a 56 year period of record. More than half the yearly precipitation falls during July, August, and September when moist air masses move into the area from subtropical areas. Rainfall during this period is from convective thundershowers that are commonly intense and of short duration. Fall, winter, and spring are relatively dry seasons, influenced primarily by air masses moving across the area from the Pacific Ocean.

The average annual temperature in the Resource Area is about 60°F. During the summer months, daytime temperatures sometimes exceed 100°F. The average maximum temperature during July, the warmest month, is near 95°F. In January, the coldest month, the average monthly minimum temperature is in the middle 20's. Through the year, a daily range of 30° or more is common, which is characteristic of southern desert climates.

Wind speeds average about 6 miles per hour (mph) throughout the Resource Area. During the summer months, the prevailing wind direction is from the southeast. Brief, strong winds often accompany convectional thundershowers during the summer months. In the winter, the prevailing wind direction is mostly from the north as Arctic air enters the area from the Pacific Northwest. The spring months (March-May) are commonly referred to as the windy season when dry, gusty winds predominate from the west in excess of 30 mph. The gusty winds coupled with dry soils occasionally cause severe afternoon dust storms.

Characteristic of desert climates, evaporation greatly exceeds the annual precipitation. Evaporation loss from water surfaces is about 75 inches per year. This affects plants by depleting available moisture for plant growth and maintenance, especially during dry periods.

MINERALS

The Resource Area is characterized by extensive volcanic rocks, igneous intrusions, fault-block mountain ranges, deep intermontane basins, and the Rio Grande rift. The northwestern portion of the Resource Area is in the transition zone between the Colorado Plateau and the Basin and Range provinces.

Basalt cinder cones and lava flows are prevalent in the West Potrillos, Aden Crater, Sierra de las Uvas, and the Animas Valley. Other volcanic rocks (rhyolite, andesite, dacite, and latite) are common throughout the area. Intrusive igneous rocks occur in the Organ Mountains, Doña Ana Mountains, Cooke's Range, Tres Hermanas Mountains, Florida Mountains, Pyramid Mountains, Little Hatchet Mountains, Animas Mountains, and Peloncillo Mountains. Many of these areas are mineralized and contain historic mining districts.

Sedimentary rocks of marine origin are common in the fault-block ranges. The most prominent exposures occur in the East Potrillo Mountains, Robledo Mountains, San Andres Mountains, and Big Hatchet Mountains. The deep basins between these fault-block mountains have potential for oil and gas.

The Resource Area is structurally complex. The most significant structural feature is the Rio Grande rift which is a tensional feature in the Earth's crust. The rift extends from southern Colorado to Texas. Geothermal energy is associated with the abnormally high subsurface temperatures that occur in the rift.

Leasables

The potential for occurrence of oil and gas within the Resource Area is concentrated within the deep intermontane basins and in the Pedregosa Basin in extreme southwestern New Mexico. Table 3-1 lists the acreage for areas of high, moderate, and low potential. Also see Map 3-1.

Possible oil and gas accumulations occur in the deep intermontane basins of the Resource Area. The Pedregosa Basin, which extends from Mexico into southwestern New Mexico, is of special interest. There are structural similarities between this area and the overthrust belt of the northern Rocky Mountains where important petroleum discoveries have been made.

The Resource Area is relatively unexplored compared to the producing oil and gas fields of northwestern and southeastern New Mexico. Extensive geophysical exploration occurred throughout the Resource Area between 1975 and the early 1980s. Several wildcat wells were also drilled during this period. There has been no exploration in recent years.

TABLE 3-1
OIL AND GAS POTENTIAL FOR OCCURRENCE
(Acres)

POTENTIAL	ALL LANDS	FEDERAL OIL AND GAS ESTATE*
High	0	0
Moderate	3,741,100	2,216,900
Low	5,344,100	2,498,800

Source: BLM Mimbres Resource Area GIS Data, 1990.

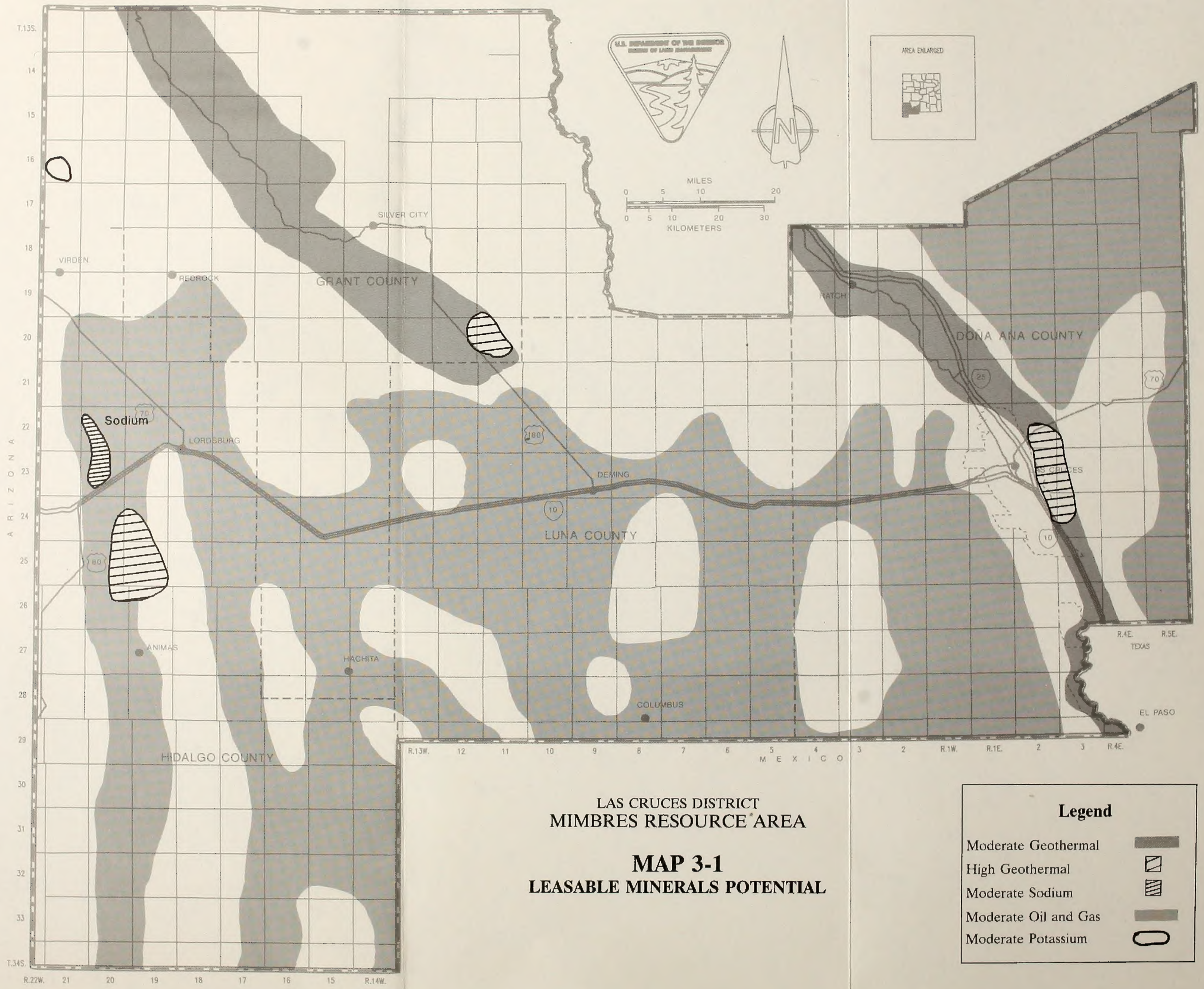
Note: * Does not include U.S. Forest Service.

There are three general areas of high geothermal potential: (1) the Animas Valley south of Lordsburg, (2) the Rio Grande rift, and (3) the Silver City vicinity. Potential acreage is listed in Table 3-2.

There are **THREE** areas classified by the BLM as Known Geothermal Resource Areas (KGRAs): the Lightning Dock KGRA in the Animas Valley south of Lordsburg, the Radium Springs KGRA north of Las Cruces, **AND THE TORTUGAS MOUNTAIN KGRA ON THE MESA EAST OF LAS CRUCES.**

Two commercial greenhouses are being heated with hot water in the Animas Valley. There is a commercial greenhouse at Radium Springs. New Mexico State University (NMSU) in Las Cruces utilizes geothermal energy for space heating, domestic water heating, the heating of swimming pools, and the heating of a greenhouse.

Extensive geothermal exploration between 1975 and 1983 led to discoveries at Radium Springs and Las Cruces. Currently, the only exploration being conducted in the Resource Area is by the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R.4E. R.5E.
MEXICO
TEXAS
SILVER CITY
VIRDEN
REDROCK
GRANT COUNTY
HATCH
DOÑA ANA COUNTY
Sodium
LORDSBURG
DEMING
LAS CRUCES
LUNA COUNTY
ANIMAS
HACHITA
COLUMBUS
EL PASO
HIDALGO COUNTY
70
180
10
25
80

LAS CRUCES DISTRICT
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

MAP 3-1
LEASABLE MINERALS POTENTIAL

Legend

Moderate Geothermal	▆
High Geothermal	▨
Moderate Sodium	▤
Moderate Oil and Gas	▆
Moderate Potassium	○

Southwest Technology Development Institute at NMSU. They are continuing their efforts to delineate areas of geothermal potential by using geophysical techniques and by drilling temperature-gradient holes.

TABLE 3-2
GEOTHERMAL POTENTIAL FOR OCCURRENCE
(Acres)

POTENTIAL	ALL LANDS	FEDERAL GEOTHERMAL ESTATE*
High	96,200	59,400
Moderate	656,800	253,400
Low	8,332,200	4,370,100

Source: BLM Mimbres Resource Area GIS Data, 1990.

Note: * Does not include U. S. Forest Service.

The only other leasable minerals with potential for occurrence in the Resource Area are potassium and sodium. The potassium-bearing mineral, alunite, occurs in volcanic rocks in the Steeple Rock area about 40 miles northwest of Lordsburg. The alkali playas west of Lordsburg are a potential source of sodium sulphate deposits. Table 3-3 summarizes the potential acreage for nonenergy leasable minerals in the Resource Area.

TABLE 3-3
NONENERGY LEASABLE MINERALS POTENTIAL
FOR OCCURRENCE
(Acres)

POTENTIAL	ALL LANDS	FEDERAL MINERAL ESTATE*
High	0	0
Moderate	18,900	15,400
Low	9,066,300	4,667,500

Source: BLM Mimbres Resource Area GIS Data, 1990.

Note: * Does not include U. S. Forest Service.

Locatables

Locatable minerals occur in most of the mountain ranges throughout the Resource Area. Mining districts are also associated with these mountain ranges. Most of the districts were active in the late 1800's and the early 1900's. Mining districts in the Organ Mountains, Cooke's Range, Florida Mountains, Little Hatchets, Pyramid Mountains, and other areas have colorful histories and were important producers of gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc, fluorspar, barite, and manganese. The Resource Area contains many of the minerals listed on the National Stockpile Inventory of Strategic and Critical Minerals.

Many of the mining districts contain deposits that are not currently economic to mine. However, these deposits could become economic with a rise in mineral commodity prices or if the United States' sources for strategic or critical minerals are no longer accessible.

The mineral resources that have been produced in the Resource Area include gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc, molybdenum, manganese, tungsten, and iron. The nonmetallic minerals that have been produced include fluorite, barite, gypsum, and silica. **OTHER MINERAL RESOURCES WHICH OCCUR IN THE RESOURCE AREA INCLUDE ANTIMONY, BERYLLIUM, BISMUTH, COBALT, NICKEL, THORIUM, VANADIUM, AND URANIUM.** Table 3-4 lists the acreage of high, moderate, and low potential. Also see Map 3-2.

TABLE 3-4
LOCATABLE MINERALS POTENTIAL FOR OCCURRENCE
(Acres)

POTENTIAL	ALL LANDS	FEDERAL MINERAL ESTATE*
High	113,000	52,100
Moderate	540,500	313,600
Low	8,431,700	4,317,200

Source: BLM Mimbres Resource Area GIS Data, 1990.

Note: * Does not include U. S. Forest Service.

Salables

The salable minerals in the Resource Area include sand, gravel, volcanic cinders, building stone, and other mineral materials such as clay, caliche, and rock that is used for aggregate. Sand and gravel deposits are most abundant along the Rio Grande Valley. Volcanic cinders occur in the West Potrillo Mountains. The Robledo Mountains contain deposits of building stone. Clay deposits occur in southern Doña Ana County. Caliche is common throughout the Resource Area. Table 3-5 lists the acreage for areas of high, moderate, and low potential. Also see Map 3-3.

TABLE 3-5
SALABLE MINERALS POTENTIAL FOR OCCURRENCE
(Acres)

POTENTIAL	ALL LANDS	FEDERAL MINERAL ESTATE*
High	85,200	62,900
Moderate	276,500	203,800
Low	8,723,500	4,416,200

Source: BLM Mimbres Resource Area GIS Data, 1990.

Note: * Does not include U. S. Forest Service.

LANDS

The BLM administers approximately 3,053,820 acres of public land in Doña Ana, Luna, Hidalgo, and Grant Counties in southwestern New Mexico. Public land comprises about 34 percent of the total surface ownership within the Mimbres Resource Area. In addition to the surface ownership, BLM also administers approximately 4,126,780 acres of Federal mineral estate. See Table 3-6 and Visual A in map pocket.

The Mimbres Resource Area is characterized by its rural qualities, vast open spaces, and generally sparse population. However, a large and expanding urban population exists along the Rio Grande and IN THE Mesilla Valley from Las Cruces to El Paso. Other populated areas include Deming, Lordsburg, and Silver City.

The urban populations, particularly in the Rio Grande and Mesilla Valleys, put a great demand on nearby public land to provide for the needs of these growing communities. The Continuing Management Guidance section (in Chapter 2) describes the current number of actions facing the lands program on an annual basis. These are expected to increase. Typical actions and authorizations include leases, permits, exchanges, communication site rights-of-way, linear rights-of way, and recreation and public purpose (R&PP) leases and patents for cemeteries, gun clubs, parks, and school sites.

Many of the linear facilities authorized under various right-of-way grants have led to the establishment of defacto right-of-way corridors. Seven officially designated corridors also exist as a result of previous MFPs. The placement of facilities has in the past been largely due to topographic and land status constraints.

ACCESS

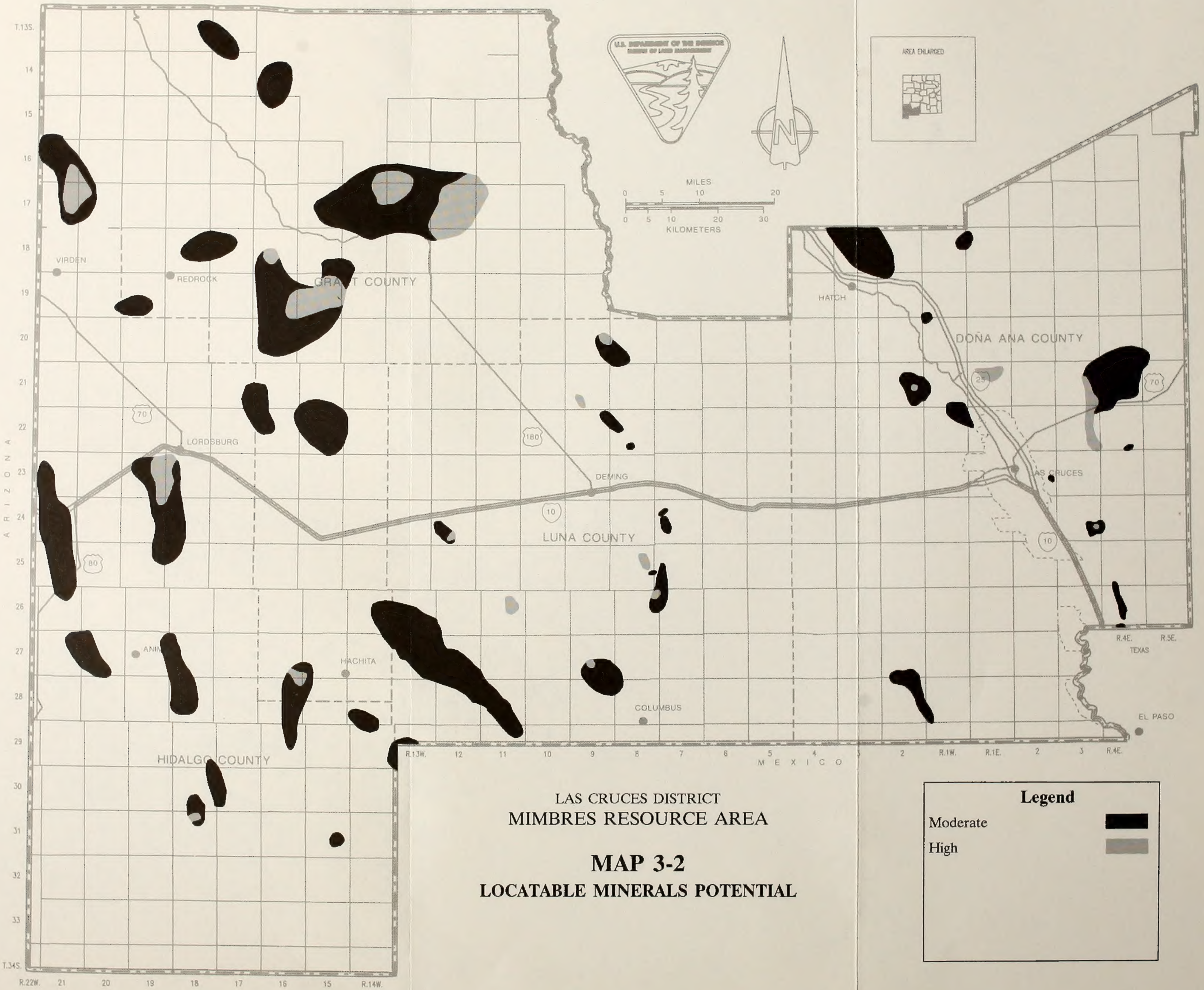
Existing transportation routes include Interstates 10 and 25, U.S. Highways 70, 80 and 180, and State Roads 9, 11, 26, 81, 90, 146, 338, and 464. In addition to the major State and Federal highways, numerous county roads traverse nearly all portions of the Mimbres Resource Area.

Traditionally, BLM's transportation network utilizes the Federal, State, and County road systems. The Easement Acquisition Program within the Mimbres Resource Area has been relatively inactive, largely due to a lack of past planning to support an acquisition program and because of minimal funding. In addition to the Federal, State, and County road system, BLM developed and maintains the 5.5-mile long Aguirre Spring Recreation Area access road, the 4.5-mile Pine Tree Trail, and the 6-mile Baylor Pass Trail. BLM also recently acquired and maintains approximately 3 miles of roads and trails in the Dripping Springs Natural Area.

Access concerns have steadily increased over recent years as the demand for access and use of public land has increased.

LIVESTOCK GRAZING

There are 347 grazing allotments within the Doña Ana, Grant, Luna, and Hidalgo County Area. Of these, 199 are within the grazing district boundary and have set grazing capacities for each allotment (Section 3). Grazing use on these allotments is covered by a permit. The remaining allotments are outside the grazing district boundary, where grazing use is covered by a lease (Section 15). Livestock, owned by **256** livestock operators, utilize the forage on these permits and leases. Approximately 20 allotments located within Hidalgo County are administered by the BLM Safford District Office located in Safford, Arizona. These allotments are administered under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between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REDROCK
LORDSBURG
ANIMAS
HACHITA
DEMING
COLUMBUS
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R.4E. R.5E.
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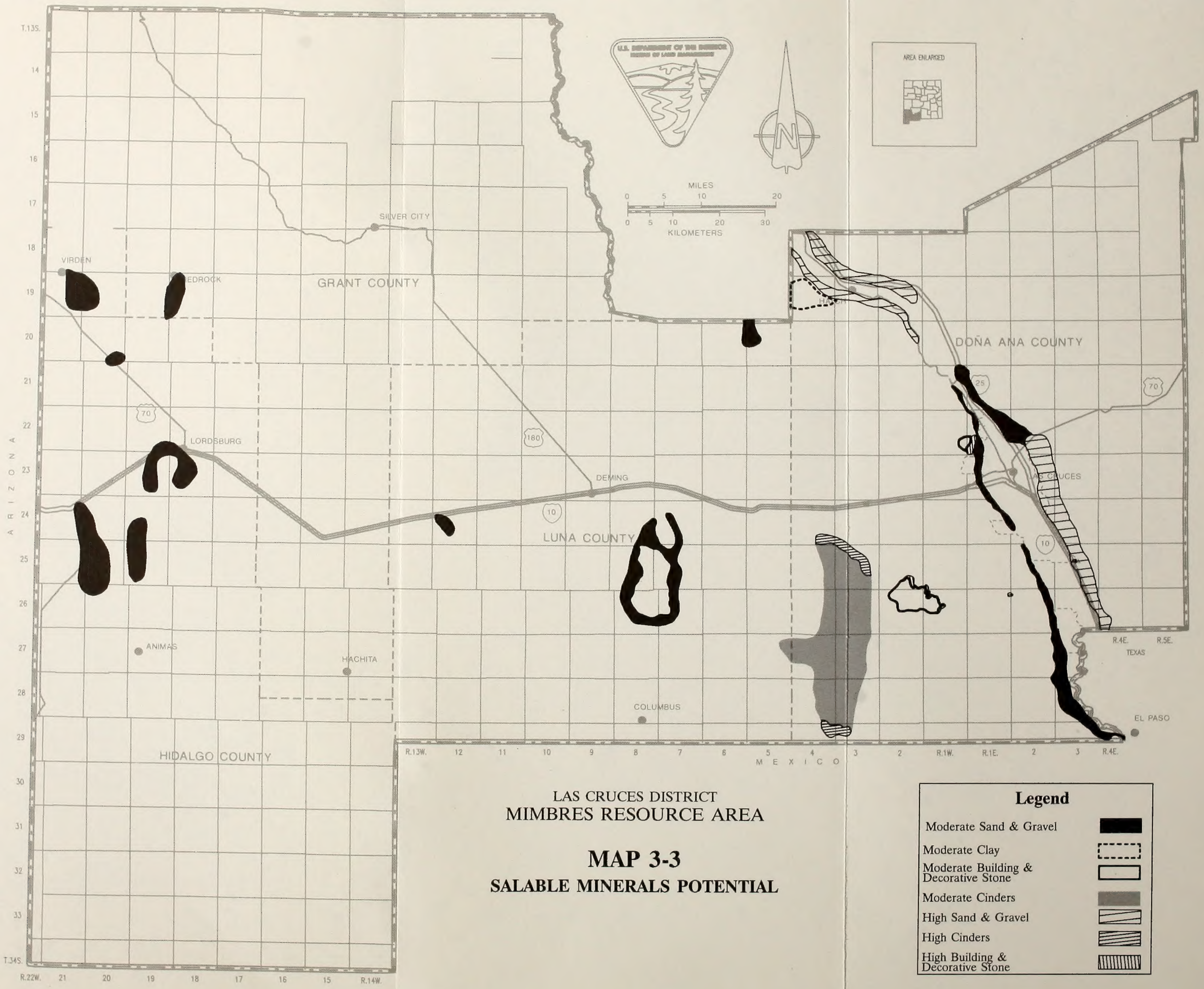
LAS CRUCES DISTRICT
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

MAP 3-2
LOCATABLE MINERALS POTENTIAL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R.14W.
A R I Z O N A
VIRDEN
REDROCK
SILVER CITY
GRANT COUNTY
70
LORDSBURG
180
DEMING
10
LUNA COUNTY
ANIMAS
HACHITA
COLUMBUS
HIDALGO COUNTY
R.13W.
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R.1W.
R.1E.
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R.4E.
M E X I C O
MILES
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5
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20
30
KILOMETERS
AREA ENLARGED
N
HATCH
DOÑA ANA COUNTY
25
70
LAS CRUCES
10
R.4E.
R.5E.
TEXAS
EL PASO
Legend
Moderate Sand & Gravel
Moderate Clay
Moderate Building & Decorative Stone
Moderate Cinders
High Sand & Gravel
High Cinders
High Building & Decorative Stone

LAS CRUCES DISTRICT
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

MAP 3-3
SALABLE MINERALS POTENTIAL

TABLE 3-6
LAND STATUS
(In Acres)

LANDHOLDER/MANAGER	DONA ANA	LUNA	HIDALGO	GRANT	TOTAL
SURFACE ESTATE					
BLM	1,126,270	759,220	850,210	318,120	**3,053,820**
Forest Service	0	0	75,540	866,660	942,200
National Park Service	52,600	0	0	0	52,600
Military Withdrawal	503,560	2,070	0	1,670	507,300
Other Withdrawn land	155,840	630	12,210	24,440	193,120
State trust	287,500	549,560	373,880	352,190	1,563,130
Private	315,420	586,340	893,330	977,910	2,773,000
TOTAL	**2,441,190**	**1,897,820**	**2,205,170**	**2,540,990**	**9,085,170**
MINERAL ESTATE					
BLM Administered					
All Minerals	1,416,850	884,090	1,134,470	691,370	**4,126,780**
Coal Only	0	0	0	0	0
Oil, Gas and Coal Only	0	0	0	0	0
Oil and Gas Only	3,940	12,790	10,840	5,170	32,740
Other	6,610	1,710	80	830	9,230
National Park Service	52,600	0	0	0	52,600
USFS Administered	0	0	75,540	857,940	933,480
WSMR Administered	503,550	0	0	0	503,550
No Federal Minerals	457,640	999,230	984,240	985,680	3,426,790
TOTAL	**2,441,190**	**1,897,820**	**2,205,170**	**2,540,990**	**9,085,170**

Source: Mimbres Resource Area Geographic Information System Data, 1990.

the Safford and Las Cruces Districts. The MOU also provides for the administration of a portion of one allotment located in Cochise County, Arizona by the Mimbres Resource Area. Fenced allotments contain intermingled unfenced parcels of State trust, private (controlled and uncontrolled), and public lands. A few allotments include Forest Service land **WHICH HAS NO FEES COLLECTED BY THE BLM**. Most of the allotments are divided into pastures with water developments in each pasture. **THOSE** water developments, which constitute base property in **LAS CRUCES DISTRICT**, are usually located on the State trust and private lands. Numerous rangeland improvement projects such as fences, pipelines, wells, storage tanks, corrals, brush control projects, authorized by rangeland improvement permits or cooperative agreements, are located on public land.

There are **30** allotments in the Resource Area which have implemented Allotment Management Plans (AMPs) **OR COORDINATED MANAGEMENT PLANS (CMPs)**. AMP **OR CMP** allotments are on a **TYPE OF** rotation grazing **SYSTEM** set up in cooperation with the individual permittee. The schedules allow for deferment on one or more pastures for a growing season or complete year's rest. Yearlong grazing has been the common practice in the past but many ranches are now practicing some type of rotation system. Activity plans, which include a grazing system are being developed on 25 additional allotments.

There are 385,282 **TOTAL** animal unit months (AUMs) **IN AN AVERAGE YEAR** of grazing use **ON FEDERAL LAND** in the Mimbres Resource Area. Grazing use consists of cattle **ON EACH ALLOTMENT** and saddle horses on **A FEW** allotments. Cow-calf operations are common with a few operators grazing steers. Common breeds of livestock are Hereford, Brangus, and Angus. Crossbreeding of livestock has improved calf crop, calving weights, and has developed cattle which are doing well in **THE** arid Southwest.

Of the 3 million acres of public land in the Resource Area, approximately 90 percent can be grazed by livestock. The remaining 10 percent is considered unsuitable due to steep slopes (greater than 70 percent) or barren areas (less than 2 percent vegetation).

VEGETATION

The vegetation in the Mimbres Resource Area varies greatly in its diversity, production, and potential due to differences in elevation, climate, soils, and topography. The Resource Area exhibits influences from the Chihuahuan Desert, Sonoran Desert, Mexican Highlands, Southern Rocky Mountains, and the Mogollon Plateau. A general description of the vegetation in the Mimbres Resource Area was gathered and compiled from the range surveys and range site mapping done in the late seventies and early eighties.

Existing plant communities and their percentage are shown in Table 3-7.

Major Land Resource Areas

The Mimbres Resource Area contains portions of two Major Land Resource Areas (MLRAs). The two MLRAs are the Southern Desert-Subresource Area SD-2 (MLRA 42) and the Western Plateau-Subresource Area WP-3 (MLRA 36). MLRAs cover large geographic areas and present a general description of the vegetation community potentially found within each area. Maps of vegetation and range sites are available for review in the Mimbres Resource Area Office.

The Southern Desert MLRA is characterized by elevations of 3,800 to 5,000 feet with mountain areas up to 8,000 feet. Gently sloping plains are broken by abrupt rising desert mountains. Climate in the warm, arid region is characterized mostly by summer precipitation with an annual rainfall of 8 to 10 inches. Average annual temperature is 60°F with extremes of 5° below zero in the winter and 110°F in the summer. Potential natural vegetation on these soils will support grassland (short, mid, and tall grass) and grass-shrubland vegetation. In the Resource Area, 89 percent or approximately 2,670,000 public land acres are in this MLRA.

The Western Plateau MLRA, characterized by elevations of 5,000 to 6,500 feet, is associated with general foothill topography with numerous canyons and dry washes adjacent to mountains. Annual precipitation is 12 to 16 inches. Average annual temperature is 56°F with extremes of 12° below zero in the winter to 103°F in the summer. Potential natural vegetation on these soils will support grassland vegetation. In the 4-County

TABLE 3-7
EXISTING PLANT COMMUNITIES

PLANT COMMUNITY	% GRASS	% SHRUBS	% FORBS	ACREAGE
Creosotebush	0-10	80-100	0-10	1,091,960
Mesquite	0-10	80-100	0-10	713,960
Snakeweed	50-60	20-30	30-40	443,090
Mixed Desert Shrub* (<10% slope)	0-15	60-90	20-30	183,200
Mixed Desert Shrub (>10% slope)	20-30	40-60	10-30	203,940
Mountain Brush	35-55	30-40	20-30	158,630
Pinyon-Juniper/Oak Woodland/Conifer	0-30	40-70	0-30	59,350
Grass Bottomlands	70-80	10-20	10-20	572,540
Grass Uplands	65-80	20-30	15-30	676,270
Riparian	30-80 (grass or grasslike)	40-60 (woody veg)	30-60	4,600
Arroyo	0-15	40-70	10-20	21,160

Source: BLM Files, 1990.

Note: *The mixed desert type includes the tarbush, catclaw, white thorn, mariola, and mixed desert shrub sub-types.

Area, 11 percent or approximately 330,000 public land acres are in this MLRA.

A more detailed description of these MLRAs can be found in the Soil Conservation Service Range Site Descriptions, Section II E, Technical Guides.

The Southern Desert MLRA covers 16 different range sites with 30 vegetation subtypes present. The six major range sites are gravelly, igneous hills, sandy, loamy, gravelly loam, malpais, and clayey. All seven major vegetation subtypes (creosotebush, midgrass, snakeweed, mixed desert shrub, mesquite, mixed mountain shrub, and tarbush) are present on the major range sites.

The Western Plateau MLRA covers 10 different range sites with 15 vegetation subtypes present. The major range site is hills. The major vegetation subtypes are midgrass, mixed mountain shrub, creosotebush, and pinyon-juniper.

Gravelly range sites occur along the footslopes of desert mountains and side slopes of arroyos and water courses. The landscape is characterized by low hills, ridges, fans, and footslopes with 5 to 30 percent slope. Creosotebush is the dominant vegetation on the gravelly range site. Small amounts of midgrasses (grama grasses and tobosa) also occur on gravelly sites.

The igneous hills range site is characterized by rolling to steep hills and mountain footslopes. Slopes average from 15 to 50 percent while direction of slope is variable. Midgrass and mixed mountain shrub are the dominant vegetation subtypes on these areas. Midgrasses are the most productive subtype. Major midgrass species include gramas, muhlys, and in smaller amounts, threeawns, tobosa, panicums, bluestems, and lovegrasses. Mixed mountain shrubs include oak brush, mountain mahogany, juniper, sumac and small amounts of other species.

Sandy range sites usually occur on level to gently sloping or undulative piedmont slopes or plains. Slopes range from 1 to 15 percent, averaging less than 10 percent. Snakeweed and mesquite are the dominant vegetation subtypes on these areas. Mesquite, the co-dominant on this range site, is usually in the sand dunes with snakeweed occurring in the interdune areas. Small amounts of midgrasses (dropseeds and tobosa) occur in association with mesquite and snakeweed.

Loamy range sites are found on piedmont slopes. Slopes range from 1 to 15 percent, but are usually less than 10 percent. Snakeweed and midgrass are the dominant vegetation subtypes on this range site. Midgrass species (gramas, muhlys, tobosa, and threeawns) occur in the same associations as found in the hills range site.

The gravelly loam range site is characterized by nearly level to rolling piedmont slopes and alluvial fans. Slopes occasionally reach 30 percent but average less than 15 percent. Midgrass, mesquite, creosotebush and snakeweed are the dominant vegetation subtypes. Midgrasses include gramas, muhlys, tobosa and threeawns. **MESQUITE, CREOSOTEBUSH, AND SNAKEWEED** have all invaded into this potentially productive range site.

The malpais range site varies considerably from nearly level to moderately steep with small areas exceeding 25 percent slope. The terrain is frequently interrupted by basalt outcrops, rocks, and occasional boulders. The site may occur on nearly level mesa tops, valley lava flows, or on hills which are usually old volcanic cones. Dominant vegetation types include midgrass, creosotebush, and mixed desert shrub. Midgrass species include gramas, muhlys, tobosa, tridens, and other associated species. **THE MIXED DESERT SHRUB TYPE INCLUDES CREOSOTEBUSH, FOUR-WINGED SALTBUSH, SNAKEWEED, CACTI, AND YUCCA.**

THE HILLS RANGE SITE IS CHARACTERIZED BY ROLLING TO STEEP HILLS AND MOUNTAIN FOOTSLOPES WITH A 15 TO 75 PERCENT SLOPE. EXPOSURE OR DIRECTION OF SLOPES ARE VARIABLE. MIXED MOUNTAIN SHRUBS AND MIDGRASSES ARE THE DOMINANT VEGETATION. MIXED MOUNTAIN SHRUBS INCLUDE PINYON, JUNIPER, SUMACS, OAK, AND MOUNTAIN MAHOGANY. DUE TO HIGHER ELEVATIONS, MORE COOL SEASON PERENNIAL SPECIES ARE PRESENT SUCH AS BROMES, FESCUES, LOVEGRASSES, MUHLYS, CURLY MESQUITE, AND RICEGRASS.

Fragile Lands

Fragile lands are areas of vegetation in poor or fair range condition, that occur on areas of critical soils (range sites with high production and erosion potential). This information is based on range inventories which included range site and vegetation mapping done from 1978 to 1981. These areas have the potential to respond favorably to changes in management, including restriction or exclusion of surface-disturbing activities. At the time of the range surveys, there were approximately 800,000 areas in poor condition and 800,000 acres in fair condition that met these criteria. See Map 2-17.

SOIL, AIR, AND WATER

Soil

SOIL SURVEYS

There are four existing soil surveys which cover the land within the Mimbres Resource Area. These surveys were conducted cooperatively by the USDA Soil Conservation Service, BLM, and the New Mexico Agricultural Experiment Station. The four surveys are:

1. Doña Ana County Soil Survey, 1980
2. Grant County Soil Survey, 1983
3. Hidalgo County Soil Survey, 1973
4. Luna County Soil Survey, 1980

The soil surveys depict map units which are made up of one or more soil series. Soils within a given soil series have similar diagnostic features and characteristics, therefore, all areas mapped as a given soil series or map unit will express similar soil characteristics (see Appendix K).

SOIL SALINITY

Soil salinity is a localized problem on isolated sites on public land within the Mimbres Resource Area. For the most part, low to moderate salinity occurs in soils found along the floodplain of the Rio Grande (predominantly private land) and closed basins and playas which occur in parts of Luna and Hidalgo Counties (also predominantly private land). Saline soils within the Mimbres Resource Area are comprised primarily of the Bluepoint series, Glendale series, Harky series, Hondale series, Mimbres series, Verhalen series, and Yturbide series. (SCS 1973, 1980, 1983)

SOIL EROSION

Soil erosion by water or wind is influenced by topography, climate, soil properties, and ground cover. There are two types of erosion caused by water, sheet erosion and gully erosion. Sheet erosion occurs on gentle slopes without defined water courses. On these areas, water spreads over vast areas, and if vegetation cover is not present, top soil is removed by the runoff. Water erosion has its greatest impact in the summer during the **RAINY** season. Gully erosion occurs where runoff becomes channeled. These channels may result from vehicle tracks, livestock and wildlife trails, hiking trails, and roads that **HAVE NOT HAD WATER BARS CONSTRUCTED ON THEM** (SCS 1973, 1980, 1983).

Wind erosion has its greatest impact in the spring when strong westerly winds occur on a regular basis. Soils which are susceptible to wind erosion are sandy soils, fine silts, and loams. (SCS 1973, 1980, 1983)

Critical Soils

Critical soils represent areas of high erosion potential as defined by SCS range site guidelines. Range sites represent broad categories of soils with similar physical and productive characteristics. Representative range sites include: gravelly, draw, clayey, gravelly loam, limy, gravelly sand, breaks, and bottomland. These range sites have been further divided into three slope classes: 0-10 percent, 10-20 percent and over 20 percent. Increasing slope generally coincides with increased erosion potential depending on soil type. See Map 3-4.

Air

The air quality in the Mimbres Resource Area is generally very good. The air quality does not exceed the State or Federal air quality standards and is classified as a Class II area. A Class II area allows a moderate amount of degradation of air quality.

Degradation of air quality in portions of the Resource Area is the result of carbon monoxide from automobiles, blowing dust, smelters (located in El Paso, Texas; Hurley and Playas, New Mexico; and Morenci, Arizona), and increased use of unpaved roads near population centers (BLM 1983). The southern part of the Mesilla Valley, from Las Cruces to El Paso has the poorest air quality in the Resource Area. Industrial pollutants and automobile exhaust from the densely populated EL Paso-Cuidad Juarez vicinity contribute heavily to air pollution. This is especially evident during the winter when temperature inversions prevent the escape and dispersion of polluted air to higher altitudes.

Blowing dust, especially in the playas near Lordsburg and farm lands near Deming and Las Cruces contribute to air pollution in those localized areas. Extensive vehicle use of unpaved roads especially near population centers also contributes to air pollution in portions of the Resource Area, especially near Las Cruces.

Water

SURFACE WATER

The Mimbres Resource Area contains portions of three major river basins as designated by the New Mexico State Engineer for regional water planning. They are the Rio Grande, Lower Colorado, and the Rio Yaqui.

The Rio Grande Basin is the most prominent of the three river basins and includes the Rio Grande surface drainage system, plus segments of two Central Closed Basins consisting of the Jornada Del Muerto and Tularosa Basins; and three of the Southwestern Closed Basins consisting of Mimbres, Playas, and Wamel Basins. The Rio Grande surface drainage in the Resource Area extends about 85 miles along the river to the New Mexico-Texas State line in a relatively narrow watershed. The closed basins located within the watershed account for a vast majority of the acreage in the Resource Area. These areas are closed topographically and normally do not contribute surface runoff to the Rio Grande drainage.

The Lower Colorado River Basin on the western side of the Continental Divide is the second major river basin in the Resource Area and includes segments of the Gila River and the San Simon Creek as well as the Animas Closed Basin.

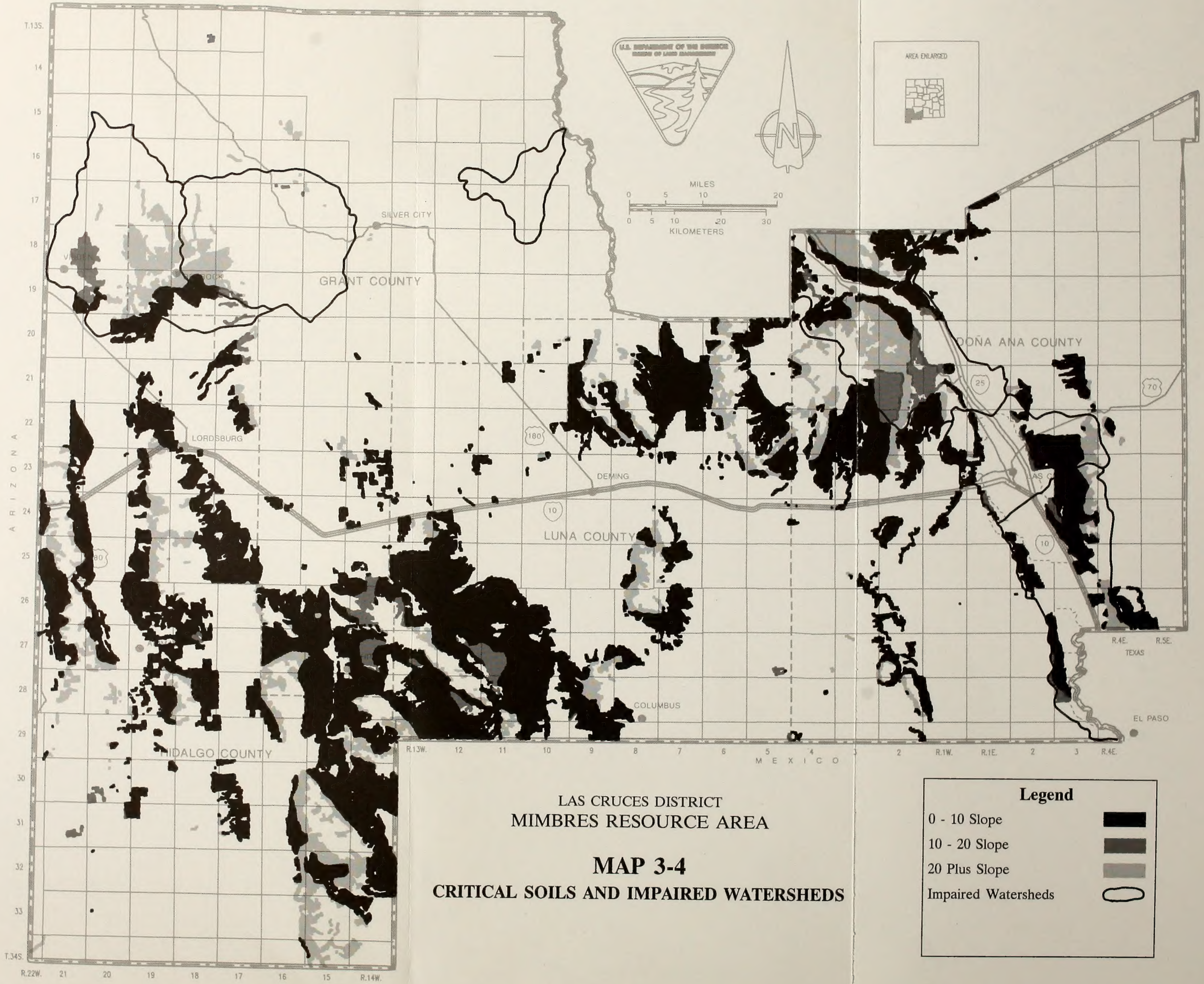
The Rio Yaqui Basin, located in the far southwest corner of New Mexico, is the third major river basin within the Resource Area and includes Guadalupe Canyon. The basin contains only 40 square miles in New Mexico and streamflow occurs in response to heavy rainfall.

Surface Water Quality

Surface water quality in the Mimbres Resource Area is moderately hard and alkaline with relatively low levels of sodium, chloride, and sulphate. Salinity, as measured by total dissolved solids (TDS) is also low except in the playa lakes within several of the closed basins and is considered slightly saline (BLM 1983). Sediment flows vary over the course of a year with the heaviest loads occurring during high flows. Average high flow sediment loads for the Rio Grande, Gila, and Mimbres Rivers are 800 tons/day, 200 tons/day, and 100 tons/day, respectively.

Water quality standards for surface water in New Mexico have been adapted by the Water Quality Control Commission to protect and sustain designated uses. General quality standards apply at all times to all support waters of the State which are suitable for recreation and support desirable aquatic life. Parameters of particular importance that are covered include: floating solids, oil and grease, plant nutrients, hazardous substances, pathogens and turbidity. Additionally, certain stream segments have more stringent standards that apply to designated uses of the surface water within a specified stream reach. In the Mimbres Resource Area, there are six stream segments, two each on the Rio Grande, Gila, and Mimbres Rivers, that have designations and standards. The water quality for these stream segments is generally within State standards; however, there are recognized problems. The Rio Grande and Gila Rivers both transport heavy sediment loads during high flows. Along the Gila River, fecal coliform bacteria is near the upper limit during low flows, and is close to not supporting secondary contact recreation. The Mimbres River has pH and temperature levels above the standards during base flows (BLM 1983).

Preparation of the "New Mexico Nonpoint Source Pollution Water Quality Assessment" (New Mexico Environmental Improvement Division 1988) was mandated by section 319 of the Federal Clean Water Act. The primary objective of this report was to identify all surface waters, groundwaters, and wetlands which, regardless of land ownership, are known or suspected of being impacted by **NONPOINT** source water pollution. Within the Mimbres Resource Area are several stream segments identified by the New Mexico Environmental Improvement Division as being impaired. These stream segments and percent watershed administered by the BLM are: (1) Rio Grande mainstream from Doña Ana downstream to Mesilla, 38 percent; (2) Mimbres River from Mimbres to San Juan, <1 percent; (3) Rio Grande from Mesilla Diversion to New Mexico-Texas State line, 41 percent; (4) Gila River from mouth of Davis Creek downstream to Redrock, 14 percent; and (5) Gila River from Redrock to New Mexico-Arizona border, 57 percent.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R.4E.
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EL PASO
M E X I C O
A R I Z O N A
SILVER CITY
VIRDEN
GRANT COUNTY
DOÑA ANA COUNTY
LORDSBURG
DEMING
LUNA COUNTY
COLUMBUS
HIDALGO COUNTY
180
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25
70
80

LAS CRUCES DISTRICT
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

MAP 3-4
CRITICAL SOILS AND IMPAIRED WATERSHEDS

Legend

0 - 10 Slope	■
10 - 20 Slope	▩
20 Plus Slope	▨
Impaired Watersheds	⬭

Sources of potential impairments include: specialty crop production, rangelands, animal holding/management areas, dredging, flow regulation, channelization, removal of riparian vegetation, and recreation.

GROUNDWATER

The Mimbres Resource Area is within the Basin and Range physiographic region and is characterized by north-trending subparallel mountain ranges separated by basins filled with alluvial material. Most of the groundwater occurs in the alluvial deposits on lower mountain slopes and deep alluvial or bolson deposits in the valley. The bolson deposits are a heterogenous mixture of rock from the surrounding uplands and generally the product of more than one sequence of erosion. The fill material ranges in age from Pliocene to Pleistocene. Groundwater is obtained from sand and gravel interbedded with clay and beds of silt. The groundwater is derived from precipitation, with most of the recharge occurring along permeable streambeds. Generally in the closed basins where groundwater sources have been developed, withdrawals exceed recharge (BLM 1983).

The evolution of the Rio Grande Valley is a major factor in the distribution of groundwater in the Mimbres Resource Area. The two major water bearing units in this region consist of unconsolidated to moderately consolidated alluvial deposits of the Santa Fe Group of Miocene to middle Pleistocene age, and the Rio Grande and tributary arroyo valley fill of late Quaternary age (BLM 1983).

The Santa Fe Group is the primary groundwater reservoir in this region. Aquifers in the Santa Fe produce most of the water used for domestic and industrial purposes, as well as a significant proportion of groundwater used to supplement surface irrigation supplies in the Rio Grande Valley. The other important aquifer unit consists of floodplain and channel deposits of the Rio Grande and tributary arroyos. These deposits are limited in extent and mostly restricted to the vicinity of the river. Recharge to the aquifers is mainly from infiltration from flash floods in the arroyos and some infiltration from perennial streams that occupy the upper reaches of several major arroyos (BLM 1983).

Secondary sources of groundwater in the Mimbres Resource Area are found in low porosity sedimentary rocks of early Tertiary age, consisting of conglomerates, sandstones, and shales. Yields from the few wells penetrating the sedimentary rocks are low, rarely exceeding a few gallons per minute. More comprehensive and detailed information on groundwater is contained in individual basin reports available at the Las Cruces District Office.

Groundwater Quality

Groundwater quality in the Mimbres Resource Area is highly variable depending upon the types of soluble minerals found in the water bearing formations of the selected basins. In most of the Resource Area, groundwater in the upper 1,000 feet is of good quality and contains less than 1,000 mg/l total dissolved solids (TDS). Additional supplies of slightly saline water with TDS content between 1,000 and 3,000 mg/l is also found in the Rio Grande Basin. Chemical analyses of wells in the area are limited in number, but those available indicate that the groundwater quality is satisfactory for livestock and wildlife use. Concentrations of fluoride above the recommended limits for livestock and wildlife were found in wells sampled in the Animas, Hachita, Mimbres, and San Simon Basins. No other parameters were above the recommended levels for livestock and wildlife. Generally, the groundwater quality in the Mimbres Resource Area is also sufficient for domestic use, with the exception of isolated cases where concentrations of sulfate, hardness, and fluoride are above State of New Mexico standards for drinking water (BLM 1983).

Groundwater Use

Water rights for the use of surface and underground water in the State are administered by the State Engineer. The Mimbres Resource Area includes all or part of 11 declared underground water basins. In all these basins, an application to appropriate underground water must be filed with, and a permit obtained from, the State Engineer (BLM 1983).

Within the Mimbres Resource Area, the primary use of water on the public land is by livestock and wildlife. Water provided for this purpose is depleted in two ways: water consumed by animals and evaporation from facilities constructed to furnish water supplies. Evaporation from dirt tanks accounts for the largest quantity of water depleted. Approximately half the water consumed by livestock and wildlife is estimated to come from groundwater sources (BLM 1983).

FIRE MANAGEMENT

Fire Ecology

Historical evidence indicates fires were a factor in the ecological development of the southern deserts. Up until the 1920s, natural fire frequency had been approximated to be less than every 10 years to 30 years depending on the vegetation type. As livestock production increased throughout the area, natural fire frequency has diminished. Over the last 80 years, extensive grasslands have been replaced by shrub communities which do not produce fuel loads capable of carrying a fire. Natural fire in combination with drought and competition played a significant role in controlling shrubs (Wright and Bailey 1982).

Natural fire (or lack of) played a significant role in the development of the major vegetation types which occur in the Mimbres Resource Area. These vegetation types include desert grass-shrub, mountain brush (interior chaparral), and woodlands.

Desert Grass/Shrub

This type was originally a grassland type. Shrubs were controlled primarily by competition with grasses, fires, and rodents. With the decrease in vigorous perennial grass stands and an increase in shrubs, the fine fuels required to carry a natural fire are nonexistent over a large part of the Resource Area.

Mountain Brush (Interior Chaparral)

This type is regarded as a fire induced vegetation type (Shantz 1947). Plant species which make up this type survive fire as evidenced by numerous seedlings and resprouting which occurs after a fire. Their large amount of loosely arranged small material and high volatile oil content make them very flammable. The dominant species which are found on this type include mountain mahogany, *Ceanothus greggii, Garrya wrightii, Quercus* spp and *Rhus* spp. Shrub cover generally recovers rapidly after a fire. About 76 percent of the preburn cover is reached within 6 years (Wright and Bailey 1982). During the years that the shrub community is recovering from the fire, dramatic increases in grasses and forbs occur in the newly created openings. Grass and forb production decreases as shrub production increases. This cycle will begin again after the next fire.

Woodland

The woodland type which occurs within the Mimbres Resource Area is comprised of pinyon/juniper and various oaks. This type is not extensive and is most common on portions of the mountain ranges which are scattered throughout the Resource Area. Historically, fire has been the dominant force controlling the distribution of pinyon-juniper, particularly juniper (Wright and Bailey 1982). Fire occurring about every 10-30 years kept the junipers restricted to shallow, rocky soils and rough topography. For the last 70 years, **FIRE SUPPRESSION ACTIVITIES, DROUGHTS, LIVESTOCK GRAZING, AND SEVERAL PERIODS OF ABOVE AVERAGE PRECIPITATION HAVE PROVIDED CONDITIONS WHICH HAVE ALLOWED** pinyon-juniper to invade adjacent communities. After a pinyon-juniper area has burned, a perennial grass-forb community develops followed by a grass-forb-shrub community and after 10 to 30 years pinyon-juniper is again the dominant type (Barney 1974).

Recent Fire History

Recent fire history (1977 to 1989) on public land within the Mimbres Resource Area is shown on Table 3-8.

Prescribed Fire History

Prescribed fires have not been a factor in resource management in the Mimbres Resource Area. A prescribed fire program is in the beginning stages and so far two burns have been completed. One in 1989 for wildlife habitat improvement (300 acres) and one in 1990 for a rangeland improvement (70 acres).

TABLE 3-8
FIRE HISTORY
1977-1989

YEAR	NATURAL CAUSED (ACRES)	VEG. TYPE[a/]	MAN CAUSED[b/] (ACRES)	VEG. TYPE[a/]
1977			< 100	DGS
	< 100	MS	< 100	DGS
	< 100	DGS	< 100	DGS
1978	< 100	DGS	< 100	DGS
	< 100	DGS		
	< 100	DGS		
	< 100	MS		
	< 100	DGS		
	< 100	DGS		
1979	< 100	DGS	< 100	MS
	> 100	MS	< 100	MS
	< 100	MS		
	> 100	DGS		
1980	< 100	MS	< 100	DGS
	< 100	DGS	< 100	DGS
1981	< 100	MS		
	< 100	MS		
	< 100	MS		
	< 100	MS		
	< 100	MS		
	< 100	DGS		
	< 100	DGS		
1982	< 100	MS	< 100	DGS
	< 100	MS		
	< 100	MS		
	< 100	DGS		
1983	< 100	DGS	< 100	DGS
	< 100	MS		
	< 100	DGS		
1984	< 100	MS		
1985	< 100	MS	< 100	MS
	< 100	DGS	< 100	W
	< 100	MS		
1986	NO FIRES ON PUBLIC LAND IN 1986			
1987	< 100	DGS	< 100	DGS
	< 100	DGS		
1988	< 100	W	< 100	MS
	> 100	MS	< 100	DGS
1989	< 100	MS	< 100	DGS
	< 100	DGS		
	> 100	DGS		
	> 100	MS		
	< 100	DGS		
	> 100	MS		
	> 100	DGS		
	> 100	MS		
	> 100	MS		

Source: BLM Files, 1990.

Notes: a/ Vegetation type; MS is Mountain Shrub, DGS is Desert Grass-Shrub, W is Woodland. Acreage is given as less than or greater than 100 acres.

b/ Man caused fires do not include prescribed fires.

WILDLIFE

Wildlife habitat and wildlife species have been identified and inventoried utilizing the BLM's Integrated Habitat Inventory and Classification System (IHICS). Sixteen distinct Standard Habitat Sites (SHSs) have been mapped within the Mimbres Resource Area based on landforms and vegetation. This information is available in the Mimbres Resource Area Office.

Big Game

There are a variety of big game species found throughout the Resource Area. These species include mule deer, Coues' whitetail deer, javelina, pronghorn, ibex, desert bighorn sheep, mountain lion and elk.

Mule deer are widespread throughout the Resource Area and are most abundant in or near the various mountain ranges. The most recent New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) population estimates show the mule deer population at approximately 15,000 animals within the Resource Area. See Map 3-5.

Coues' whitetail deer occupy a limited range in the Resource Area. These deer are primarily found in the Peloncillo Mountains in western Hidalgo County. The most recent NMDGF population estimates show the whitetail population at approximately 2,500 animals within the Resource Area. See Map 3-5.

Mule deer are found in several SHSs, with the major use in the Grass, Mixed Shrub, Arroyo Riparian, and Riparian SHSs. Coues' whitetail deer prefer the Grass, Mixed Shrub, and Conifer Mountain SHSs which are undisturbed or are in or near the potential climax community (Anthony and Smith 1977).

The results of previous fecal analyses (BLM Files 1990) show diets for mule deer and whitetails to be high in several browse species: silktassel, mountain mahogany, oak, and sumac. A number of forbs also show up in significant amounts, including globemallow and bladderpod.

Javelina are commonly found as far east as the Florida Mountains and north past the Gila River. Their main concentrations are in southern Hidalgo County. The most recent NMDGF population estimates show the javelina population at approximately 1,000 animals on public land.

Javelina commonly use the Arroyo Riparian, Grass Mountain and Pinyon-juniper Grass Mountain SHSs (Donaldson 1965). Important food species for javelina include: prickly pear, agave, ocotillo, sotol, beargrass, and mast of juniper, oak, and pinyon. Forbs such as filaree, hog potato, and wild onion are also important food plants. A study in Texas showed evidence that mesquite pods are also an important food source (Everitt, et al 1981).

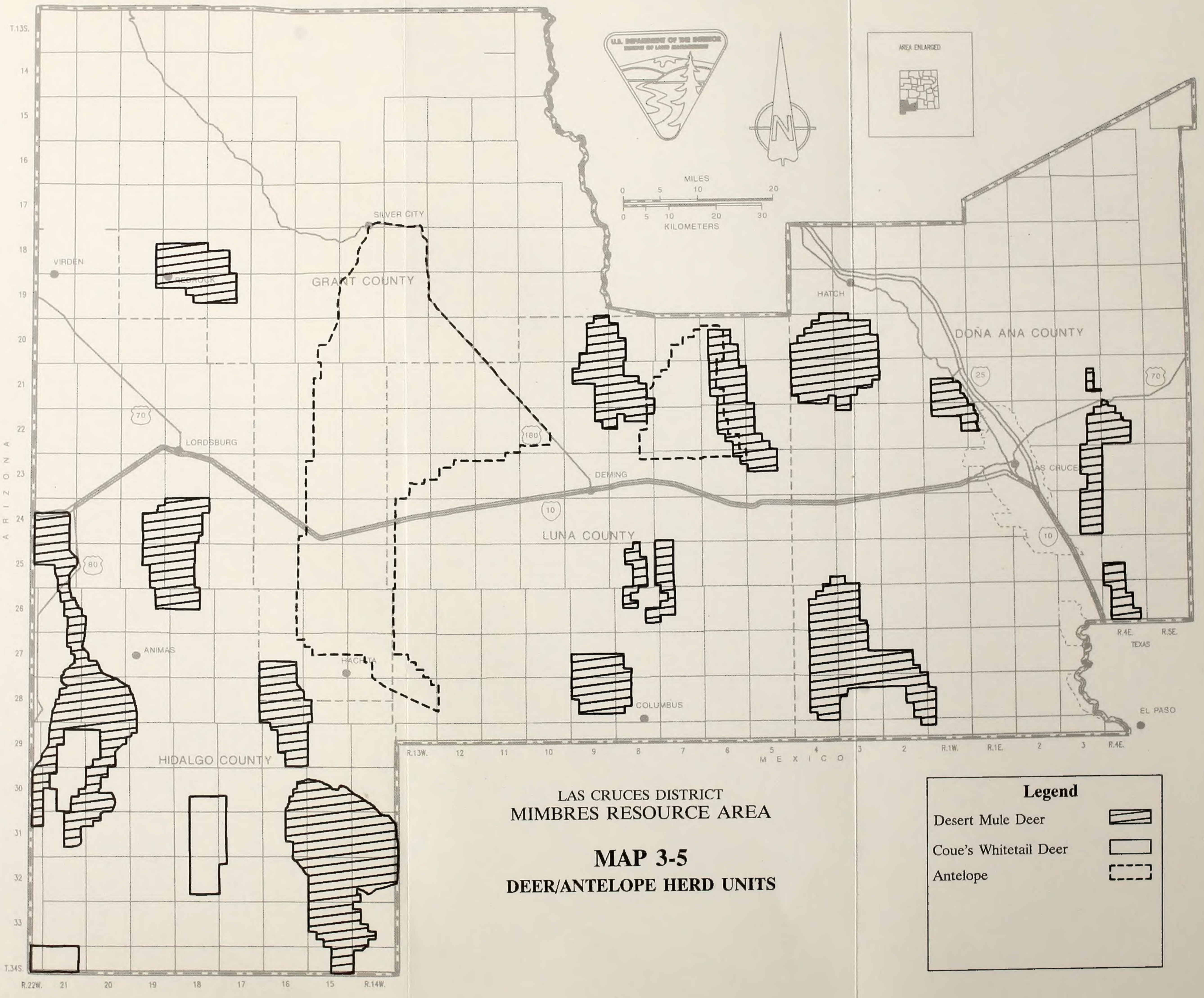
Several small pronghorn antelope herds are found in the Resource Area. These herds are found primarily in Luna and Grant Counties on land which contains private, State and Federal holdings. See Map 3-5. The most recent NMDGF population estimate for pronghorn antelope is approximately 500 animals. Food habit studies (Yokum 1980) have concluded that pronghorn diet consists primarily of shrubs, 71 percent, 22 percent forbs, and the remainder grass. However, in years of high forb production, pronghorn will eat more forbs than the studies indicate (Yokum 1980).

A herd of Iranian ibex, an exotic species, occupies the Florida Mountains. Beginning in 1970, seven ibex releases totaling 73 animals were made in the range. Today the population ranges between 400 and 500 animals (BLM and NMDGF Files 1990). A carrying capacity of 400 animals (post hunt) was set in 1988. The ibex in the Floridas are mainly browsers with a majority of their diet consisting of mountain mahogany, silktassel, and oak.

Prior to setting the carrying capacity, the ibex population periodically reached levels of 600 animals or more. When this occurred, the ibex would move into less rugged terrain resulting in competition with mule deer for available feed.

Desert bighorn sheep, a State-listed endangered species, occur in four mountain ranges located in Hidalgo County. These ranges are: Big Hatchets, Little Hatchets, Alamo Huecos, and the Peloncillo Mountains. The desert bighorn population is **APPROXIMATELY 120** animals and has been fluctuating between 75 and **120** animals for the past several years (BLM Files 1990). See Map 3-6.

Competition for feed with deer and cattle is a major concern in the occupied mountain ranges. Fecal samples (BLM Files 1990) collected for



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DEMING
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LUNA COUNTY
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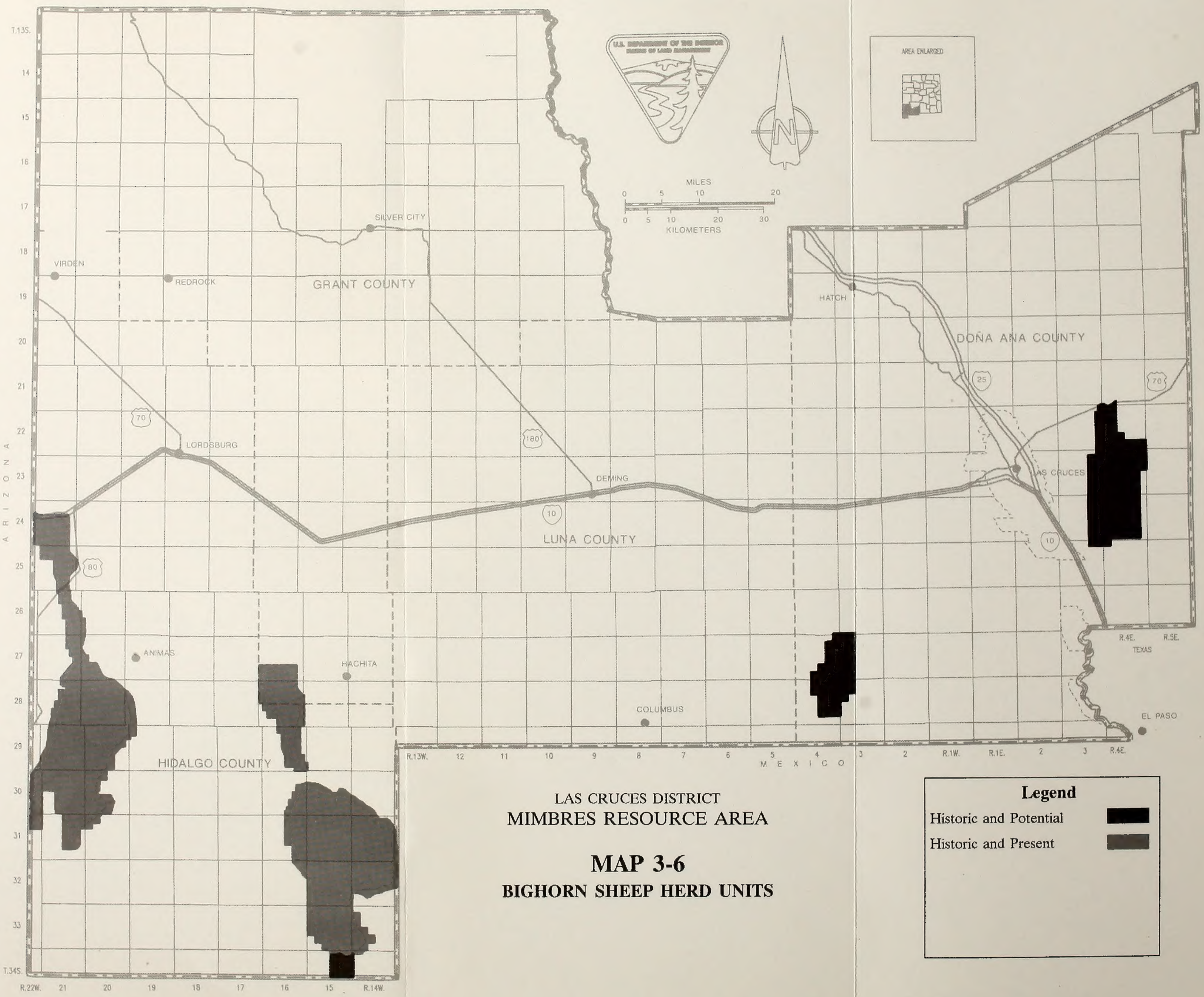
ANIMAS
HACHITA
COLUMBUS
EL PASO
HIDALGO COUNTY
Legend
Desert Mule Deer
Coue's Whitetail Deer
Antelope

LAS CRUCES DISTRICT
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

MAP 3-5
DEER/ANTELOPE HERD UNITS



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LAS CRUCES DISTRICT
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

MAP 3-6
BIGHORN SHEEP HERD UNITS

Legend

Historic and Potential	■
Historic and Present	▨

sheep from the Big Hatchet **MOUNTAINS** show important food items for sheep consist of: mountain mahogany, cactus, winterfat, and oak. Forbs and grasses are also present in significant quantities. High use of the same shrubs and forbs is evident in deer studies while the same shrubs, forbs, and grasses make up a high proportion of **SEASONAL** cattle diets. Along with dietary competition with deer and livestock, **WHICH HAVE HAD DETRIMENTAL AFFECTS ON SHEEP ARE DISEASE AND PREDATION** which **MAY** affect the size and health of desert bighorn sheep herds in the Resource Area.

Mountain lions occur in all of the mountain ranges throughout the Resource Area. The mountain lion is the largest predator found in the Resource Area and feeds primarily on mule deer, javelina, and small mammals.

Elk occur in the Resource Area but are limited to the small, scattered parcels of public land which are near the National forest in Grant County. Population estimates for elk on public land are not available.

Small Game

Small game species found in the Resource Area consist of scaled quail, Gambel's quail, Mearn's quail, mourning dove, white wing dove, band-tailed pigeon, and sandhill crane.

Scaled quail are the most abundant and widespread of the quail found in the Resource Area. They can be found in any of the SHSs with the possible exceptions of Pinyon-Juniper/Grass Mountain, Oak Draw, and Conifer Mountain SHSs. These birds prefer dense shrub stands for cover and will feed near or in these stands if adequate food sources exist. Population estimates are seldom given because population levels fluctuate and are greatly affected by weather conditions.

Gambel's quail are also abundant throughout the Resource Area. The habitat requirements for Gambel's are similar to and overlap with the scaled quail but they are primarily found nearer to water and are more common in or near the Arroyo Habitat and Riparian SHSs. Gambel's quail populations fluctuate under the same conditions as scaled quail.

Mearn's quail are uncommon in the Resource Area and known populations are limited to the Peloncillo Mountains and the higher terrain north of the Gila River up to the Gila National Forest boundary. At one time, Mearn's quail were more abundant but livestock grazing has altered their preferred habitat (Ligon 1961). Mearn's quail prefer and are found primarily in the Oak Draw, Pinyon-Juniper/Grass Mountain, and Conifer Mountain SHSs.

Mourning dove are migratory birds which occur throughout the Resource Area. These birds feed largely on dried seeds, and they require water which they use regularly throughout the day. During the winter, most of the mourning dove will leave the State, but there are some birds which will remain in the area.

White winged doves occur throughout the Resource Area but are most common in the mountain ranges of Hidalgo County and the Gila River Valley. A permanent source of water is a summer range requirement. Most of these doves leave the State during the winter.

The band-tailed pigeon occurs, but is uncommon, in the Resource Area. Primary SHSs for these pigeons are: Pinyon-Juniper/Grass Mountain, Oak Draw, and Conifer Mountain. Depending on the availability of their preferred food, pinyon nuts and acorns, the pigeons may not be seen in the Resource Area in years when feed is not abundant.

Sandhill cranes may occur on public land near areas bordering farmlands and river valleys. In the Resource Area, cranes are commonly seen in and around farmlands near Lordsburg, Animas, Deming, and Hatch with cranes also using the Lower Gila Box as a fly way between feeding and roosting grounds on the Gila River.

Various species of waterfowl are found throughout the Resource Area. They are usually found during the winter months and occur primarily near agricultural areas where plentiful feed is available, water impoundments (stock ponds) and rivers.

Non-Game

There are 489 species of wildlife (excluding invertebrates) found in the Resource Area. Of this number, 451 species are considered non-game species. Avian species account for 62 percent (278) of the total non-game species which occur in the Resource Area. This high number can be attributed to the varied topography and climate occurring within the area as well as the Resource Area's proximity to ecologically diverse areas found nearby in Mexico, Arizona, Texas, and northern New Mexico.

There are 79 species of non-game mammals, 82 species of reptiles and amphibians, and 37 species of fish which occur in the Resource Area.

Fish

There are 37 species of fish which occur in the Resource Area. The only significant fishery habitats are the Gila River and the Rio Grande along with their perennial tributaries. Sport fish species include channel catfish, flathead catfish, bluegill, crappie, and largemouth bass.

CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Brief Culture History

Several distinct cultural groups are known to have inhabited the region under consideration during the prehistoric period. The earliest human occupation occurred from about 9,500 BC to approximately 4,000 BC. This culture is known as the Paleoindian period and is divided into three traditions; Clovis, Folsom, and Plano. Isolated projectile points have been found within the study region which have been assigned to these Paleoindian cultures. The second major prehistoric cultural tradition in the region has been referred to as the "Archaic" or "Desert Archaic." The various Archaic cultures are believed to have occupied the study area from 7,000 BC to about AD 100. The Archaic cultures are believed to have been nonsedentary, pre-pottery hunters and gatherers. Archaic period "lithic scatter" sites are known to occur within the study region, and are primarily identified through various projectile point styles. The third major southwestern cultural group has been identified as the Mogollon. The Mogollon culture group has been divided into the western Mogollon and eastern or Jornada branch of the Mogollon. The Mogollon period starts at approximately AD 200 and extends to approximately AD 1400. Within this time period, several distinct changes occur and are characterized as the Early Pithouse Period, the Late Pithouse Period, and the Pueblo Period. Agriculture was a basic element in all of the Mogollon periods, but was probably supplemented by hunting and gathering. Archeological sites from all three of the above stated Mogollon periods are known to occur within the study region. In addition, the Apache are known to have occupied southern New Mexico from approximately AD 1650 to 1890. Archeological evidence for this occupation is rare, but Apache period sites could occur within the study area, as well as post-contact historic period sites (LeBlanc and Whalen 1980).

Archeological surveys have documented sites and isolated occurrences representative of all the cultural periods described above. Several areas within the Mimbres Resource Area are considered to contain high densities of archeological sites. These high density areas include the East and West Mesas and the terraces of the Rio Grande, tributaries of the Rio Grande, the terraces of the Mimbres River, all permanent spring localities, and all large intermittent washes.

The Paleoindian period is represented primarily by isolated projectile point discoveries throughout the Mimbres Resource Area. No single component Paleoindian site is currently known within the Mimbres Resource Area but these sites are often deeply buried. Many other Paleoindian sites have been destroyed by thousands of years of cut and fill erosion. Numerous sites of the Archaic period have been documented throughout the Mimbres Resource Area. These sites are most often characterized as small campsites, lithic procurement localities, and specialized activity areas. La Cueva in the Organ Mountains is known to contain deeply stratified Archaic midden deposits.

Many sites representative of the Mogollon period are known within the Mimbres Resource Area. The Old Town Site on the Mimbres River is a good example of a Classic Mimbres village. Most large Mimbres phase village sites within the Resource Area have been extensively damaged by pothunters. In many cases, pothunters have destroyed these types of sites with mechanized heavy equipment. Jornada Mogollon sites are fairly common and sites such as Los Tules, a pithouse village, and La Cueva contain Jornada Mogollon components. Also, many of the prehistoric rock art sites are believed to date to the Mogollon period.

Post-contact aboriginal sites such as Apachean sites are known to occur but are often hard to identify due to their ephemeral nature and the fact that the artifacts often resemble those from earlier periods. A wide variety of historic period sites are known to occur within the Resource Area. Some of these sites are located along two significant historic trails which pass through the Resource Area, the Camino Real and the Butterfield Trail. Historic sites include mining camps, military forts such as Fort Cummings, homesteads, and unique sites such as the historic Dripping Springs Natural Area Resort.

Additional Class II and III archeological surveys will result in a more complete picture of archeological site types, subsistence, and settlement patterns within the Mimbres Resource Area.

IN 1990, THE RESEARCH, ORIENTATION, PROTECTION, AND EVALUATION STUDY (ROPES) REVIEW WAS WRITTEN BY THE CENTER FOR ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH (CAR), NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY AS A CHALLENGE COST SHARE PROJECT WITH THE BLM (HART AND ACKERLY 1990). THE ROPES REVIEW FOCUSED ON THE STATUS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH WITHIN THE MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA AND RECOMMENDED CULTURAL RESOURCE NONPROJECT FUNDING PRIORITIES FOR THE 1990's.

PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES OCCUR THROUGHOUT THE MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA. VERTEBRATE FOSSILS AND TRACE-FOSSILS ARE FOUND IN MOST OF THE SEDIMENTARY ROCK FORMATIONS IN THE AREA REPRESENTING THE PALEOZOIC, CRETACEOUS, AND EARLY TERTIARY AGE, AND YOUNGER SEDIMENTS OF PLIOCENE AND QUATERNARY AGE. VERTEBRATE FOSSIL FAUNAS REPRESENT THOSE OF PERMIAN AMPHIBIANS AND EARLY REPTILES (280 TO 240 MILLION YEARS), CRETACEOUS DINOSAURS (80 TO 65 MILLION YEARS), PRIMITIVE MAMMALS FROM THE PLIOCENE SANTA FE GROUP (15 TO 3 MILLION YEARS), AND PLEISTOCENE MAMMALS (3 MILLION TO 12 THOUSAND YEARS) MUCH LIKE THE ANIMALS WE KNOW TODAY.

MANY CAVES IN THE AREA HAVE PRODUCED THE BONES OF ANIMALS THAT BECAME FATALLY TRAPPED IN THEM THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO. THE ADEN LAVA FLOW AND U-BAR-CAVE ARE EXAMPLES. A WELL-PRESERVED SKELETON OF A GROUND SLOTH WAS FOUND IN A LAVA TUBE IN THE 1920'S AND MANY LATE QUATERNARY MAMMALS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED FROM OTHER CAVES IN THE AREA. THESE ADD IMPORTANT SPECIMENS AND DATA TO THE LIST OF EXTINCT FAUNA OF NEW MEXICO. REMAINS OF MAMMOTH, CAMEL, HORSE, AND GROUND SLOTH ARE COMMONLY FOUND IN THESE DEPOSITS BUT WHOLE SPECIMENS ARE EXTREMELY RARE.

RECREATION

The Mimbres Resource Area provides many diverse opportunities for recreation, both developed and dispersed. Developed recreation is dependent on developed recreation sites, such as campgrounds or picnic areas, while dispersed recreation occurs over large areas encompassing most of the land in the Resource Area, independent of developed facilities. Public land provides 47, 39, 12, and 34 percent of dispersed recreation opportunities, respectively in Doña Ana, Luna, Grant, and Hidalgo Counties (New Mexico Natural Resource Department 1986).

Developed recreation on public land in the Resource Area is limited to the Organ Mountains, where camping is available at the 57-unit Aguirre Spring Recreation Area. Picnicking is available at the Aguirre Spring Recreation Area, the 14-unit La Cueva Picnic Area, and the 4-unit Dripping Springs Natural Area. Developed hiking trails in the Organs include the 6-mile Baylor Pass Trail, the 4-mile Pine Tree Trail, the 1½-mile Dripping Springs Natural Area Trail, the 1-mile La Cueva Trail, and the 2-mile Crawford Trail. The Aguirre Spring Recreation Area and Dripping Springs Natural Area receive approximately 51,400 visitors per year each for a total of 102,800 visitors at developed recreation sites in the Organ Mountains. The effect on visitor use of a recently implemented day use fee has not yet been evaluated. These sites are used mainly by people from the metropolitan area, Las Cruces (population 128,000), El Paso (population 479,899), and Alamogordo (population 24,024). Visitors from all over the United States and several foreign countries (particularly Mexico, West Germany, and Canada) use the area regularly. Accuracy of visitor use data is continually improving and should show an annual total for the Organ Mountains of nearly 200,000 visits through 1990.

The Resource Area issues approximately eight Special Recreation Permits annually. Approximately half of these permits are for hunting guides while the rest go to annual events including the Baylor Pass Trail Run, the Bataan Memorial Competitive March, the Great Overland Windsail Races, the Renegade Horse Endurance Ride, and the Coyote Classic Mountain Bike Race. The demand for Special Recreation Permits has been increasing steadily over the last several years, and it is likely that additional mountain bike races and motorcycle and all-terrain vehicle races will become regular events on public land in the Resource Area. These Special Recreation Permits depend on unique recreation resources including the Baylor Pass Trail, primitive roads in the Organ Mountains, and the Lordsburg Playa.

Dispersed recreation occurs throughout the Resource Area, and public land provides the majority of outdoor recreation opportunities in Doña Ana, Luna, and Hidalgo Counties.

Dispersed recreation in the Resource Area includes hunting, hiking, camping, picnicking, rockhounding, fishing, birdwatching, and vehicle recreation. Table 3-9 summarizes recreation visits by special recreation management area (SRMA) and activity. Hunting is the most widespread dispersed recreation use in the Resource Area, with hunting seasons for game birds, small game, or big game species open year-round. Big game hunts start on April 1 when the license year starts and run through March 31 when the license year ends. These license figures probably do not accurately reflect the number of hunters on public land in the Resource Area because many hunters (particularly deer, elk, bear, and turkey hunters) are more likely to use Forest Service land than public land, while many quail hunters and ibex hunters come to the Resource Area from all over the State and other states.

Hiking is one of the major recreation uses of developed facilities in the Resource Area, with an estimated 40 percent of recreationists at Aguirre Spring Recreation Area engaging in hiking, and approximately 90 percent of recreationists at the Dripping Springs Natural Area. These estimates combined with the visitor estimate suggest that nearly 21,000 hikers use the Baylor Pass or Pine Tree Trails and over 46,000 hikers will use the Dripping Springs Natural Area annually.

The New Mexico Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)(NM Natural Resources Department 1986) analyzed outdoor recreation activities statewide and found that approximately 34 percent of New Mexicans engage in nature viewing, 25 percent in sightseeing, 24 percent in picnicking, 20 percent in pleasure driving (cruising), 17 percent in hiking, and 15 percent in shore fishing. Other recreation uses involving public land include backpacking (4 percent of New Mexicans), bicycling (6 percent), primitive camping (7 percent), developed camping (7 percent), horseback riding (2 percent), hunting (4 percent, NMDGF data indicate approximately 10 percent of New Mexicans hunt), and whitewater boating (1 percent). The SCORP further identified outdoor recreation needs by county for the State. The USDI Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service compiled a Natural Rivers Inventory, Natural and Free-flowing Phase in April of 1980. The report described the Gila River in Arizona and New Mexico as being natural and free-flowing, and qualifying for further study for wild, scenic or recreational river potential. In May of 1982, the USDI National Park Service completed an inventory of outstandingly remarkable values of the free-flowing rivers and determined that the Gila River in the Mimbres Resource Area contains five of the seven values which can qualify a river for further study. The Gila River between the Burro Mountains and Virden will be studied for wild, scenic or recreational status as part of the RMP. The RMP team will serve as the study team for the river in accordance with the BLM policy (see Gila River Study Report, Appendix J).

The National Scenic Trails Act of 1968 required the Secretary of Agriculture to complete a Comprehensive Plan for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail and for the Departments of Agriculture and Interior to prepare environmental assessments of the trail. The Comprehensive Plan was completed in 1985 and directed the BLM to analyze potential routes for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail in RMPs.

TABLE 3-9
ESTIMATED RECREATION VISITS BY
SPECIAL RECREATION MANAGEMENT AREA (SRMA) AND ACTIVITY

ACTIVITY	ORGAN MOUNTAINS	LOWER GILA BOX	MIMBRES EXTENSIVE
ORV	1,000	100	10,000
CAMPING	10,000	500	3,000
PICNICKING	80,000	500	3,000
HUNTING	10,000	100	100,000
HIKING	40,000	500	10,000
SIGHT SEEING	20,000	0	20,000
ROCK CLIMBING	1,000	0	500
BICYCLE	5,000	0	5,000
TOTAL	187,000	1,700	151,500

Source: BLM, 1991.

VISUAL RESOURCES

The visual resources of the Resource Area have been inventoried and classified into Visual Resource Management (VRM) classes through the Las Cruces/Lordsburg MFP Amendment/EIS. VRM classes are management zones wherein management actions and controls on proposed actions vary in relation to scenic values. (See Appendix G.) Management objectives for VRM Classes are:

Class I. Preserve the existing character of the landscape. Natural ecological changes and very limited management activities are allowed. Any change to the characteristic landscape must not attract attention.

Class II. Retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the character of the landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

Class III. Partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be moderate. Management activities may attract attention but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. Changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

Class IV. Provide for management activities which require major modification of the existing landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high. These management activities can dominate the landscape and be the major focus of viewer attention; however, every attempt should be made to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance, and repeating the basic elements.

An 8,947-acre portion of the Organ Mountains is designated as a Scenic Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and is managed as a VRM Class I area. VRM Class II areas include the wilderness study areas (WSAs), the Organ and Franklin Mountains, and most mountain ranges and hills in the Resource Area, especially along highways. Class III areas are mainly the flatlands, uplands, and basin areas along highways. Class IV areas comprise the nonhilly areas that are not visible from highways. See Map 3-7.

WILDERNESS

The Mimbres Resource Area contains **14 WSAs DESIGNATED IN 1980**, totalling 382,909 acres. The BLM completed the New Mexico Statewide Wilderness Study Environmental Impact Statement and Wilderness Analysis Reports in January of 1988. Portions of seven of these WSAs (totalling 239,018 acres) are recommended as suitable for wilderness designation by the New Mexico State Director. These areas are the Aden Lava Flow WSA, the Big Hatchet Mountains WSA, the Cowboy Spring WSA, the Gila Lower Box WSA, the Organ Mountains WSA, and the West Potrillo Mountains and Mount Riley WSAs. The Alamo Hueco Mountains WSA, Blue Creek WSA, Cedar Mountains WSA, Cooke's Range WSA, Florida Mountains WSA, Robledo Mountains WSA, and Las Uvas Mountains WSA are recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

FOUR other areas within the planning area boundary have been studied for wilderness suitability. All three areas are managed either jointly or completely by the San Simon Resource Area of the Safford District in Arizona. The Peloncillo Mountains WSA contains 12,317 acres of which 4,061 acres are within New Mexico. It has been recommended as suitable for wilderness designation. The 4,146-acre Guadalupe Canyon Instant Study Area was studied for wilderness suitability in the Coronado National Forest Plan, and was recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation. The 932-acre Apache Box **AND THE 2,791-ACRE HOVERROCKER** WSA were studied for wilderness suitability in the Arizona Mohave Wilderness EIS and recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

All areas studied for wilderness suitability are currently being managed under the Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review, and will continue to be managed as WSAs until Congress either designates the areas as wilderness or releases them from the wilderness review process through legislation.

Public land has been consolidated in four areas through acquisition of State trust or private lands, necessitating wilderness inventories on these areas. The four areas are the southern Peña Blanca Inventory Unit in the Organ Mountains from Barr Canyon to Peña Blanca; the Organ Needles Inventory Unit in the Organ Mountains from the southern boundary of the Organ Mountains WSA south to Squaw Peak; the Gray Peak Inventory Unit in the Peloncillo Mountains from Gray Peak south to Post Office Canyon; and the Apache Box Inventory Unit from Apache Box south to Crookson Peak. These four areas all meet the wilderness criteria for size, solitude, opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation, and supplemental values (see Appendix I, for Wilderness Inventory Reports). The Peña Blanca, Organ Needles, and Gray Peak Inventory Units all appear to be very natural. The Apache Box Inventory Unit has substantial human impacts to naturalness.

SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

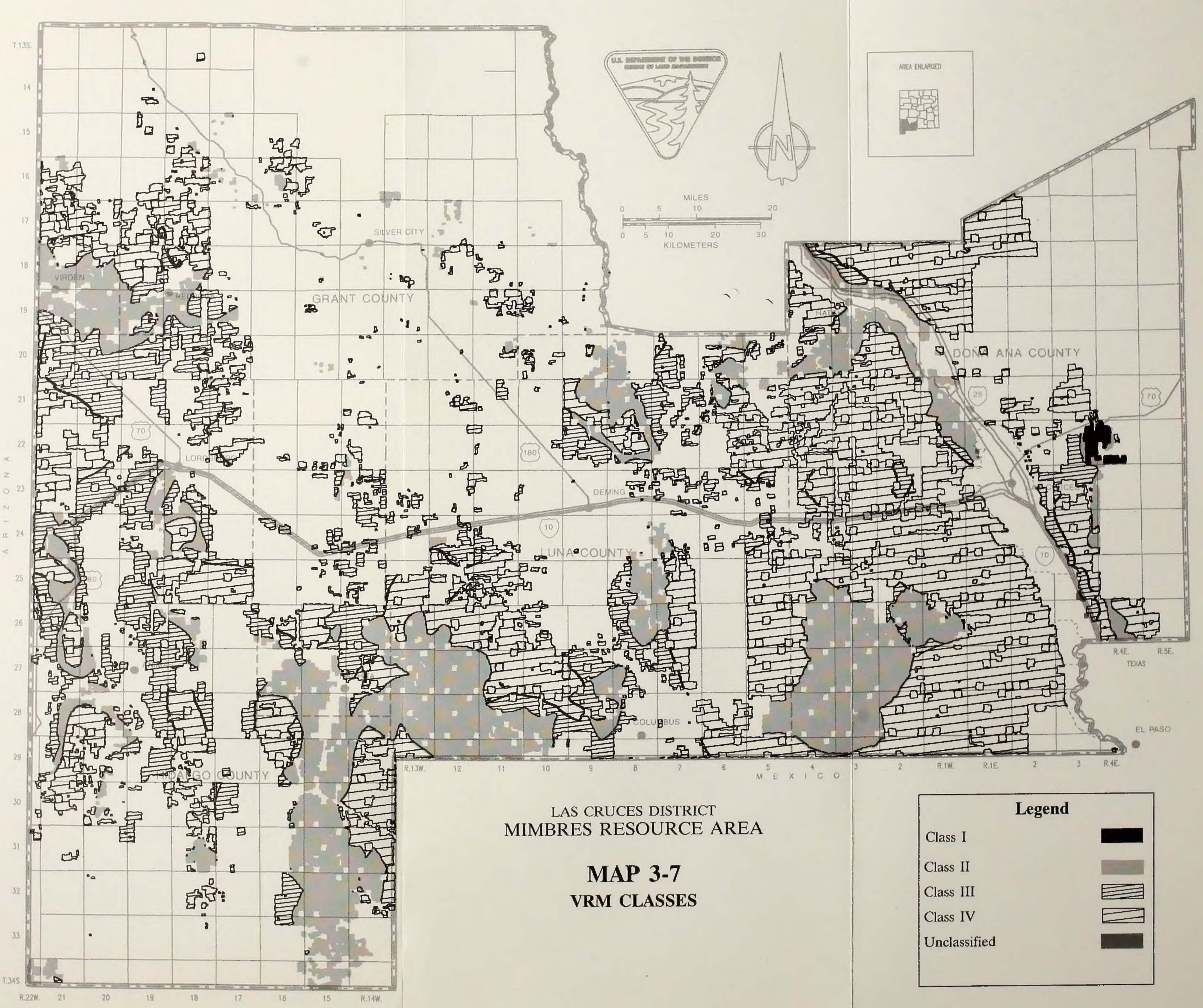
Under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, the BLM is mandated to conserve, protect and recover special status species (T&E), **THEIR ESSENTIAL HABITATS, AND DESIGNATED CRITICAL HABITAT.** Species proposed for **FEDERAL** listing as special status species and **PROPOSED** critical habitat shall be managed with the same level of protection as listed species. With candidate species, the BLM shall carry out management, consistent with the principles of multiple use for the conservation of candidate species and their habitats. The BLM shall carry out management for the conservation of State-listed species. State laws protecting these species apply to all BLM programs and actions to the extent that they are consistent with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and other Federal laws.

Plants

THERE ARE 88 SPECIAL STATUS PLANT SPECIES WHICH OCCUR IN THE MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA. THESE PLANT SPECIES AND THEIR FEDERAL/STATE STATUS ARE LISTED IN APPENDIX L-1.

Animals

There are 56 special status animal species which occur within the Mimbres Resource Area. Of the 56 species, 5 are listed as Federally endangered (FE), 3 are Federally threatened (FT), 19 are category 2 candidate species (FC2), 6 are State endangered 1 (SE1), and 23 are State endangered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VIRDEN
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HATCH
DONA ANA COUNTY
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DEMING
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COLUMBUS
HIDALGO COUNTY
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4
3
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R.1W.
R.1E.
2
3
R.4E.
R.4E.
R.5E.
Legend
Class I ■
Class II ▨
Class III ▤
Class IV ▭
Unclassified ■

LAS CRUCES DISTRICT
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

MAP 3-7
VRM CLASSES

2 (SE2). **SEE APPENDIX L-2** for the names and status of the special status species.

RIPARIAN AND ARROYO HABITATS

Riparian

Riparian areas are lands directly influenced by permanent water. **THEY HAVE** visible vegetation or physical characteristics reflective of permanent water influence. Lake shores and stream banks are typical riparian areas. Also considered as riparian areas are springs, seeps, and drainages which have a water table **CLOSE TO THE SURFACE** with vegetation which is indicative of riparian areas.

Riparian areas are unique and among the most productive and important ecosystems. Characteristically, riparian areas display a greater diversity of plants and wildlife than adjoining ecosystems. Healthy riparian systems filter and purify water as it moves through the riparian zone, reduce sediment loads, and enhance soil stability, and contribute to groundwater recharge and base flows.

Within the Mimbres Resource Area are 16 designated riparian areas. These areas are:

Doña Ana County--Sotol Creek, Indian Hollow Creek, Filmore Canyon, Ice Canyon, Adams Riparian area.

Grant County--Apache Box, Bear Creek, Gila Middle Box, Ash Creek, Blue Creek.

Hidalgo--Guadalupe Canyon, Gila Lower Box, San Simon Cienega, Emory Canyon, Thompson Canyon **(BIG HATCHET MOUNTAINS)**.

Luna County--Spring Canyon.

These riparian areas contain diverse riparian vegetation types. Types of vegetation found include:

Trees--Arizona sycamore, Fremont cottonwood, netleaf hackberry, Arizona walnut, box-elder, velvet ash, Gooding willow, western soapberry, desert willow, various oaks and junipers.

Shrubs--Apache plume, screwbean mesquite, seepwillow, rabbitbrush, chokecherry, honey mesquite, sumac.

Arroyo

Arroyo habitats are an important component of wildlife habitat and watershed within the Resource Area. These areas are directly influenced by runoff from seasonal storms (usually summer, winter) and provide cover and feeding areas for wildlife in relation to adjoining lands. Arroyo habitats are usually found in grassland/shrubland vegetation types, extending out from canyons which drain desert mountain ranges.

Common vegetation found in these habitats include:

Trees--desert willow, netleaf hackberry, western soapberry, juniper.

Shrubs--Apache plume, rabbitbrush, sumac, honey mesquite, fourwing saltbush, algerita.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The following profile on social and economic conditions was prepared for the four counties within the Mimbres Resource Area. A separate supplement for the City of El Paso and El Paso County has also been prepared but, due to space limitations, was not included in this document. Copies of that document are available at the Mimbres Resource Area Office. To briefly summarize, there is a close social and economic relationship between the City of El Paso, El Paso County and public land in the Mimbres Resource Area, particularly in southern Doña Ana County. Since most land in Texas is privately-owned, many Texans rely on the public land in New Mexico for recreational opportunities. Economic and population growth in the "Rio Grande Corridor," between Las Cruces and El Paso, is also closely related.

Population

The population of the Mimbres Resource Area increased from 144,178 in 1980 to 179,200 in 1988 (see Table 3-10). Ninety percent of this increase (31,660) occurred in Doña Ana County. While the population of Luna County increased by 2,515 and the population of Grant County increased by 996, the population of Hidalgo county decreased by 149. The population increase in Doña Ana County was concentrated in the Rio Grande Valley from Leasburg to the Texas State Line. This area, known as the "Rio Grande Corridor," has also been the scene of rapid economic development. The population changes in the Mimbres Resource Area are the result of migration to areas of economic growth and emigration from areas of economic decline, and are closely related to the changes in reported wages adjusted for inflation. The Bureau of Business and Economic Research has predicted similar trends in population growth until the year 2010. According to these predictions, the population of Doña Ana County will increase by 117.2 percent to 211,100, the population of Grant County will increase by 35 percent to 33,800, the population of Hidalgo County will increase by 42.9 percent to 8,655, and the population of Luna County will increase by 54.5 percent to 24,100. These predictions are consistent with National population trends toward slow growth or decline in rural areas and concentration of population in mid-sized cities and suburban areas.

Housing Trends

According to the 1980 Bureau of the Census report, there were 52,191 housing units in the Mimbres Resource Area. Doña Ana County had 33,944 permanent housing units and 5,456 mobile homes, Grant County had 9,631 housing units and 1,754 mobile homes, Hidalgo County had 2,326 housing units and 359 mobile homes, and Luna County had 6,290 housing units and 1,286 mobile homes. From 1980 until 1985, the State of New Mexico maintained building inspection offices in Las Cruces, to serve Doña Ana County, in Deming to serve Grant and Luna Counties, and in Lordsburg, to serve Hidalgo County. In 1985 these offices were consolidated into the Las Cruces Building Inspection Office which serves the entire Resource Area. As a result, it is not possible to quantify the number of housing units built in each county. However, since 90 percent of the population growth in the Mimbres Resource Area occurred in Doña Ana County form 1980 to 1988, and 94 percent of new jobs created in the Resource Area during this time were in Doña Ana County; it would be reasonable to assume that over 90 percent of the new housing built in the Mimbres Resource Area from 1980 to 1987 was built in Doña Ana County. The housing industry is very sensitive to fluctuations in the business cycle and particularly to interest rate fluctuations. The number of building permits issued in the Mimbres Resource Area reached its peak in 1984, with 1,761 housing units authorized. Since that time, the number of permits issued for the Resource Area has fluctuated between 700 and 1,000.

TABLE 3-10
POPULATION CHANGE 1980 TO 1988

YEAR	DOÑA ANA	LUNA	GRANT	HIDALGO	MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA
1980	96,340	15,585	26,204	6,049	144,178
1988	128,000	18,100	27,200	5,900	179,200
CHANGE	31,660	2,515	996	(149)	35,022
% CHANGE	32.86%	6.14%	3.805	2.465	4.295

Source: Bureau of Business and Economic Research, The University of New Mexico, Albuquerque 1988.

Employment Trends

In 1979, there were 41,381 jobs in the Mimbres Resource Area, and in 1987 there were 51,915 for a net increase of 10,534.

Doña Ana gained 9,962 new jobs or 95 percent of the jobs created in the Mimbres Resource Area. Grant County lost 31 jobs, while Luna County gained 332 new jobs and Hidalgo County gained 274 new jobs. This amounts to an increase of almost 25 percent for the Mimbres Resource Area. Doña Ana County had the greatest percentage increase in jobs of almost 34 percent. Employment in Hidalgo County increased by 20 percent, and in Luna County by almost 8 percent. Grant County lost less than 1 percent of 1979 employment. The private sector gained 7,817 new jobs in the Mimbres Resource Area; while government employment increased by 2,717. The retail trade sector accounted for an increase of 3,068 new jobs for a gain of 43 percent, the service sector gained 2,007 new jobs for a gain of 54 percent, 1,208 new jobs were created in agriculture for a gain of 49 percent, and manufacturing gained 1,113 new jobs for a gain of 29 percent. Employment in the mining industry declined by 1,021 or 39 percent, and the construction industry lost 250 jobs, or an 8 percent decrease. From 1979 until 1987, government employment increased by 2,717, for an increase of 20 percent. Employment by local governments added 2,573 new jobs for a 29 percent increase, employment by State government increased by 812 or 22 percent, and Federal employment increased by 332 or 7 percent.

Trends in Per Capita Income

When corrected for inflation, per capita income in the Mimbres Resource Area has increased by less than 1 percent from 1979 to 1987. Doña Ana County is the only county to experience an increase in per capita income after inflation. From 1979 to 1985, the average per capita incomes of Luna, Grant, and Hidalgo Counties declined in relation to the State average while per capita income in Doña Ana increased in relation to the State average. Per capita income is less than the State average in all the counties in the Mimbres Resource Area. Doña Ana County has the highest per capita income ($8,532), followed by Grant County ($7,860), Hidalgo County ($7,539), and Luna County ($6,944). The average per capita income for the State of New Mexico was $8,881 in 1985. The reduction of per capita income for Grant, Hidalgo, and Luna Counties is the result of unemployment in the metal mining, smelting, and construction industries. Most of the new jobs created in these counties have been from the lower paying service, retail trade, and government sectors. Another measure of aggregate purchasing power is reported wages from the Covered Employment and Wages Quarterly Report by the New Mexico Employment Security Department. This report summarizes the total reportable wages in each employment sector for the counties of the State. The result of this shift in employment is even more striking when 1987 wages (corrected for inflation) are compared to 1979 wages. Wages in the mining sector decreased by 42 percent from 1979 to 1987, wages in the construction sector decreased by 7 percent, and wages in the Federal Government Sector decreased by 8 percent. During the same period, wages in the service sector increased by 63 percent, in local government by 38 percent and in finance insurance and real estate by 35 percent. These changes have resulted from macro-economic trends which have affected many regions of the nation in similar ways.

Summary

From 1979 until 1987, a social and economic transformation has been occurring in the Mimbres Resource Area. There has been remarkable economic and population growth in Doña Ana County, and slow or negative economic and population growth in the remaining counties. This has resulted in a concentration of population and income in Doña Ana County, principally in the area from Las Cruces to El Paso, Texas known as "The Rio Grande Corridor." It is likely that this trend will continue, and that the Counties of Grant, Luna, and Hidalgo will continue to grow more slowly in relation to Doña Ana County.

Attitudes

Public opinion and attitude research has shown that most of the general public is not informed about many areas of government policy and is, therefore, not concerned. Another large group consists of people who have knowledge of policy issues, but do not generally have strong opinions because they do not feel as if they are directly affected, or they do not feel that they are well informed. The vast majority of the public who do not volunteer their opinions belong to these two groups. Persons who are concerned enough to be informed and volunteer their opinions are generally motivated by their value system or economic concerns and termed an "issue public." These persons are more likely to participate in civic and governmental affairs and are likely to volunteer their opinions in an effort to influence policy decisions. They are a small but important segment of the population who tend to be "opinion leaders" (Oskamp 1977).

There are two broad categories of issue public which have provided comments for the RMP/EIS process. One group is primarily motivated by economic values; they have an economic interest in the development of natural resources, and a strong belief in the ability of the free market system to provide economically based solutions to resource issues.

The second "issue public" that provided comments for the RMP/EIS process are motivated by environmental concerns. Research has shown that the numbers of persons expressing these concerns have increased dramatically since the 1960's. This increase is related to media coverage of environmental disasters such as oil spills, as well as to direct observations of pollution and environmental problems (Oskamp 1977). These persons are motivated by concerns of environmental deterioration and perceive private economic interests as contributors to the problem.

The most controversial issues are those which are concerned with the conflict over land use for economic purposes versus ecological benefit. These issues include grazing, wilderness, ACEC, access to public land, and land ownership adjustments. Noncontroversial issues involve land uses that are seen to be destructive by both issue publics, such as unrestricted off-road vehicle use or clearly defined areas of resource protection such as cultural resources and mining reclamation. Vehicle management, minerals, cultural and paleontological resources, right-of-way corridors, and recreation are relatively noncontroversial issues at this time. There are two "issue publics" with fundamentally conflicting philosophies over resource issues. On one hand is the ranching community, on the other, the environmentally motivated public. Their positions are strongly held because they are based on fundamental values. The economically motivated ranching community views public land as a source of livelihood for their communities. They view the value of the land in terms of it's capacity for production, and are opposed to perceived restrictions to the economic use of the land. The environmentally concerned public perceive the land as habitat for man and the native complement of species. They place high value on biodiversity, aesthetics, and the land as a source of pure air and water; and as refuge from urban life where it is possible to find solitude. These may not be mutually exclusive conditions; it is the goal of the planning process to balance economic use of the land with a healthy and productive ecosystem.

Social Conditions

The population of the Mimbres Resource Area has a long and varied history. The earliest inhabitants were Amerindians who first occupied the area as early as 12,000 B.C. The first inhabitants of the area were hunters who subsisted on now-extinct animals such as giant bison and mammoth. These hunters disappeared by 6,000 B.C. and were replaced by a hunting and gathering society. By 3,000 B.C. the first agriculture was introduced into this area from Mexico. The importance of agriculture increased until AD 1,200 when there were extensive pueblo villages along the Rio Grande, Mimbres, and Gila valleys. Two distinct cultural groups, the Jornada Mogollon and the Mimbres survived by farming and hunting. The fate of these people is unknown, but the remains of their villages are still found in the valleys, and their pottery has become world famous. Sometime after the departure of these farming peoples, the area was occupied by nomadic hunting groups. The most famous of these, the Apache, were inhabiting this area when Don Juan de Onate led the first Europeans through this area in 1598. The initial settlement of this area proceeded slowly. Refugees from the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 settled at Ysleta, Texas. Some of their descendants now occupy the village of Tortugas in Doña Ana County. The Camino Real, a trade route from Chihuahua to Santa Fe, was established in the 1700's and passed through Doña Ana County. The villages of Mesilla, Las Cruces, Doña Ana, and Robledo were stations on the Camino Real. Control of New Mexico passed from Spain to Mexico with the Treaty of Cordova on August 24, 1821. The area was a remote northern province of Mexico until the Mexican War of 1848 and the Gadsden Purchase of 1853. The first Anglo settlers arrived in the 1860's (Jenkins 1973). As a result of the history, the Mimbres Resource Area has a blend of Anglo and Hispanic culture which gives it a distinctive quality.

The present population of the area is almost evenly divided between Hispanic and Anglo (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1980). The greatest concentration of Hispanics is in the Mesilla Valley, where many of the small towns have a distinctive "New Mexican" atmosphere. The present population is influx because of an extensive amount of immigration into Doña Ana County. In 1980, only about 50 percent of the residents of the Mimbres Resource Area had been born in the State of New Mexico. After rapid growth in the 1970's, the rate of growth has slowed. This is due to several demographic factors; the baby bust, less migration as the population gets older, a general lowering of fertility rate, and the fact that international migrants tend not to stay in New Mexico. The population will continue to age until 2010 and beyond. In 1980, 27 percent of the population of the Mimbres Resource Area were 14 or younger, 65 percent were from 15 to 64 years of age, and 9 percent were 65 years of age or older. In 1990, 25 percent of the population is 14 or younger, 64 percent of the population was 15 to 64 years of age, and 11 percent were older than 65. The 65+ age group will become an increasing proportion of the population, particularly in Luna and Hidalgo Counties; Doña Ana County and Grant County will also follow this trend, but will have a lower proportion of the 65+ age group (UNM 1988). The educational level of the population will increase particularly in Doña Ana County where approximately 20 percent of the residents are enrolled in post-secondary education. Another trend which is apparent is the return of professionals to graduate school or other training programs to keep pace with the rapid technological pace of the late twentieth century. The Mimbres Resource Area's future population will be older, more educated and will be more likely to be employed in the service sector or in government than the present population. The cultural mixture of the population will remain approximately 50 percent Hispanic and 50 percent Anglo with a small number of Native Americans and other ethnic groups. The population will be more urban and less rural, although agriculture will remain an important part of the social environment. The concerns and attitudes of the population will be affected by these long-term demographic trends.

Economic Relationships

MINERAL PRODUCTION AND HOUSING

From 1985 until 1989, 1,916,640 cubic yards of sand and gravel, 80,756 tons of building stone, 53,066 cubic yards of cinders, and 853,538 cubic yards of other materials were produced from BLM sources in the Mimbres Resource Area. These products had an on-site value of $762,201. These products were essential to the construction industry which produced approximately $50 million in wages during 1989. From 1980 until 1989, an average of 1,021 houses were constructed annually in the Mimbres Resource Area. This requires an annual production of 50,650 cubic yards for housing purposes, assuming a requirement of 50 cubic yards of aggregate per housing unit. The remainder of the materials produced from BLM sources were used for commercial construction, road construction, and road maintenance.

Source Location

Sand, gravel, and building stone are required materials for building and road construction. These products have a low unit cost at the mine site. The critical components of cost for these resources is the cost of transportation to the site of use (Peterson et al. 1984). Optimally, the sites of production should be as close as possible to the sites of use. However, this is not always desirable because the environmental costs of production, such as air pollution and reduction in visual quality are not compatible with the sites of use, such as residential development. The direct costs of transportation should be balanced with the indirect costs of production to the community. The cost of transporting aggregate is $0.20 per yard/mile (Las Cruces Transit Mix 1991). An increase in the haul distance of 30 miles would result in an increase of 80 percent in the cost of aggregate for the concrete producer, an increase of 12 percent for 3,000 pounds concrete delivered to the site, and an increase of 6 percent for a typical 2,000 square feet house footing and slab. Assuming that the costs of production are equivalent at any site and that scarcity of certain types of aggregate is not a factor, the relocation of aggregate pits to site 30 miles more distant would add about $500 to the cost of an $85,000 frame house (Cal Pacific Estimators). The effect of an increased cost of aggregate on the costs of road construction and maintenance are dependent on the location of the road in relation to the source of aggregate.

RECREATION

There is a substantial demand for recreational activities on public land in the Mimbres Resource Area, with an estimated 360,000 visitor use days for outdoor recreation annually. At the present time, picnicking accounts for about 30 percent of the visitor use days in the Resource Area, this is followed by hunting, hiking, sightseeing, camping, bicycling, and rock climbing. Recent surveys of recreation use indicate a high demand for multi-use areas within 1 hour travel time of urban centers (US Fish and Wildlife Service 1980). Recreational activities that have gained in popularity from 1960 until 1980 include bicycling, running or jogging, day hiking, camping, and backpacking. Hunting, and sightseeing have remained stable during this time period. "Nonconsumptive" uses of wildlife such as bird watching and photography have experienced a slow but steady growth from 1960 until 1980.

The economic benefits of recreational activities are difficult to assess because in many cases market pricing for outdoor recreation does not exist, and some benefits attributable to outdoor recreational activities are external to the existing pricing mechanisms (Ward 1980). Two methods have been used to determine economic benefits derived from outdoor recreation; the travel-cost method and surveys of "willingness to pay" for recreational experiences. The travel-cost method is based on the fact that travel is generally the single greatest expense incurred in the recreational experience. Both methods have inherent weaknesses in that the "willingness to pay" method relies on the perceptions of recreational users which may be biased by the context of the survey, and on the other hand, the travel-cost method is not based on the actual site prices (entry fees). The economic effect of recreation on local economies is best estimated from the expenditures of recreationists (Flather, C. H. and Hoekstra, T. W. 1989). The expenditures of hunters have been increasing at a rate of 12 percent per year on a constant dollar basis (Joyce 1989). In Texas and New Mexico, the average big game hunter spent $277 per day, the average small game hunter spent $91 per day, the average waterfowl hunter spent $79 per day, and other hunters spent an average of $51 per day during 1980 (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service Analyses of the 1980 Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation). Sixty percent of this was spent for travel, meals and lodging, 39 percent was spent for equipment, and roughly 2 percent was spent for access fees. Using these estimates, the 110,000 hunter days (New Mexico Department of Game and Fish 1990) in the Mimbres Resource Area generated over $14 million in revenues. The expenditures for other forms of outdoor recreation are more difficult to assess because there is very little data. Expenditures for recreation are proportional to the distance traveled, the equipment required and the entry fees paid. Since there were an estimated 360,000 visitor days for recreational purposes on land in the Mimbres Resource Area; recreation is making a large contribution to the local economy. The greatest economic contribution is made by those forms of recreation which draw visitors from outside of the Resource Area, and which require large expenditures for equipment or attract visitors frequently.

VEGETATION

Sales of native vegetation in the Mimbres Resource Area are a small but significant portion of resource production. In recent years, the popularity of "desert landscaping" has increased because of its low maintenance and water requirements. This trend can be expected to continue as Doña Ana County becomes more urbanized and residential development moves from the irrigated Rio Grande Valley to the drier sites on the East and West Mesas. If water is the limiting factor to population growth in the Southwest, then desert landscaping will be essential to conserve water supplies. Recommended plants for desert landscaping in the Mimbres Resource Area include: desert olive (*Forestiera neomexicana*), desert willow, (*Chilopsis linearis*), mesquite (*Prosopsis pubescens*), Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*), broom dalea (*Dalea scoparia*), chamisa (*Chrysothamnus naseosus*), cliffrose (*Cowania neomexicana*), creosotebush (*Larrea tridentata*), four-wing saltbrush (*Atriplex canescens*), littleleaf sumac (*Rhus microphylla*), mariola (*Parthenium incanum*), Yucca spp., beargrass (*Nolina microcarpa*), ocotillo (*Fourquieria splendens*), Agave spp., and prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia* spp.) (Phillips 1987). At the present time, 200 to 500 native plants are sold annually in the Mimbres Resource Area. The retail value of these plants ranges from $10 to $25 for prickly pear cactus to over $65 for Spanish dagger yucca (Budagher's Nursery 1990). The economic contribution of the vegetation sales program is from $6,000 to $21,000 per year and benefits small local business. This represents a small portion of the native plant trade in the Resource Area, but it could be developed to a greater extent if other sources of native plants, such as West Texas, decline. If population and housing trends continue, the use of drought tolerant native vegetation for landscaping will increase.

CHAPTER 4

CHAPTER 4 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyzes the impacts which would result from implementing **THE PROPOSED PLAN. THE PROPOSED RMP IS ALTERNATIVE D (THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE IN THE DRAFT) MODIFIED AS A RESULT OF PUBLIC INPUT.**

This chapter also analyzes the cumulative impacts resulting from Continuing Management Guidance and Actions which are common to all alternatives, as the impacts are likely to occur no matter which alternative is ultimately selected. This chapter further analyzes the anticipated impacts of the four issues and nine management concerns as they relate to **THE PROPOSED PLAN**. Cumulative impacts are summarized at the end of this chapter.

The cause of an impact is tied to a component of the **PROPOSED PLAN** as identified in Chapter 2. The effect of the impact is tied to a component of the environment described in Chapter 3. The impacts discussed in this chapter were assessed on the basis of the description of the **PROPOSED PLAN** presented in Chapter 2. This assessment took into account the mitigation measures and standard stipulations described in Chapter 2, Continuing Management Guidance. Because of those design features included to minimize environmental impacts, the impacts assessed in this chapter are considered to be unavoidable. If impacts are not discussed, the analysis determined that impacts would not occur or would be insignificant. The following elements of the environment were analyzed but are not addressed since no impacts were identified: climate, topography, fire, prime or unique farmlands, floodplains, hazardous waste, and wetlands. A summary of the impacts by alternative is presented in Table S-2.

The "long-term" for purposes of the analysis in this document is 20 years and the "short-term" is 5 years. The analysis of unavoidable adverse impacts, short-term versus long-term productivity, and irreversible and irretrievable impacts is discussed in the impact analysis for each resource rather than under a separate heading. If irreversible and irretrievable impacts or short versus long-term productivity are not discussed in a given section, there are none.

Following selection of an RMP, activity plans with environmental analyses will be developed where needed to implement the RMP and to provide specific guidance for management of affected areas. Specific land-use decisions, however, will be made for areas to be designated as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) and for off-road vehicle designations. The emphasis of this chapter is the general resource allocation issues, rather than site-specific impacts. Site-specific environmental analyses will be conducted for specific projects and proposals prior to implementation. **THE ANALYSES WILL BE CONDUCTED BY AN INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM OF BLM RESOURCE SPECIALISTS. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION WITH APPROPRIATE AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS, AND INDIVIDUALS WILL BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE PROCESS. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS (EAs) WILL BE COMPLETED BEFORE STARTING ANY PROJECT. ALL EAs WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC REVIEW.**

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CONTINUING MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE AND ACTIONS

This section analyzes the cumulative impacts resulting from Continuing Management Guidance. These impacts are common to all alternatives and would likely occur no matter which alternative is ultimately selected. The estimated surface area disturbed per year over a 20-year period under Continuing Management Guidance is summarized in Table 4-1 (acreages calculated from figures in Table 2-1).

TABLE 4-1
ESTIMATED SURFACE AREA DISTURBED PER YEAR

TYPE OF ACTION	TOTAL AREA DISTURBED (ACRES)
Oil & Gas Exploration Wells	0.6
Oil & Gas Access Roads	0.9
Geothermal Exploration Wells	0.3
Geothermal Access Roads	0.9
Mining Notices	30
Mining Plans of Operation	0.9
Mineral Material Sales	83
Fencing	2.4
Pipelines	20
Troughs	0.4
Storage Tanks	0.1
Wells	1
Prescribed Burning	2
Leases-2920	5
Permits-2920	10
R&PPs	80
Linear ROWs	600
Site ROWs	50
Vegetative Products Removal	0.05
Water Spreaders	0.025
Wire Checks	0.2
Wildfires	125
Spring Developments	0.1
Umbrella Catchments	0.1
Exclosures	0.25
TOTAL (Rounded)	1,020

Source: BLM Files 1991

MINERALS

About 3,250 acres of land in the southern portion of the West Potrillo Mountains have high potential for volcanic cinders. About 3,160 acres in the Organ Mountains Wilderness Study Area (WSA), 1,800 acres in the Florida Mountains WSA, and 500 acres in the Cooke's Range WSA have high potential for the occurrence of locatable minerals. The restrictions on mining imposed by the Interim Management Policy for WSAs would preclude exploration, development, and production of mineral resources in these areas. The Baylor Recreation Area, a withdrawal made under the Classification and Multiple Use Act, contains about 200 acres that have high potential for the occurrence of locatable minerals. This area will continue to be closed and unavailable for exploration and development under the mining laws.

The public land in the West Potrillos represents a major regional source of volcanic cinders. Producers may have to consider mining on State trust land in the West Potrillos. There would not be any immediate or short-term impacts caused by the Interim Management Policy restrictions on mining in the Organs, Floridas, or Cooke's Range. However, there could be long-term, adverse, cumulative impacts if areas like these are unavailable for mineral production. The United States could be deprived of potential sources of base and precious metals.

(See Appendix A for the Mineral Resources Policy and Mineral Leasing Proposals.)

LANDS

Exchanges and sales can be complicated by valuable commodities of sand and gravel that occur in the Mimbres Resource Area, especially in the rapidly growing community around Las Cruces in Dona Ana County. The costs of these commodities, when considered in the appraisal price, **WOULD** raise the fair market value of the lands. Excavation, to remove sand and gravel, could **AFFECT** future use of lands for commercial and industrial purposes.

DEVELOPMENT OF vehicular access in the Mimbres Resource Area could enhance the issuance of linear and site rights-of-way by opening new routes into public land. Some rangeland improvements could block access to right-of-way sites unless special mitigation measures are developed.

Some withdrawals and land classifications prohibit the BLM from administering specific public land laws within the Mimbres Resource Area, thus creating management conflicts.

Cultural and paleontological resources, WSAs, ACECs, visual resource management (VRM), and special status species (plants and animals) can restrict the issuance of land authorizations (rights-of-way, exchanges, sales, recreation and public purposes) and require special mitigation stipulations. Appendix B contains the lands related policy and regulations.

IN SUMMARY, EXTRACTION OF VALUABLE DEPOSITS OF SAND AND GRAVEL could impact the exchange program. Withdrawals and classifications which prohibit BLM from administering specific public land laws could create management conflicts. **DEVELOPMENT OF** vehicular access could enhance right-of-way issuance by opening up new routes into public land. Cultural and paleontological resources, WSAs, ACECs, VRM and special status species (plants and animals) can restrict land authorizations by requiring special mitigation stipulations.

ACCESS

As mineral exploration and development occur, access routes will likely be created which will improve vehicular access to and across existing blocks of public land, particularly where mineral potential is high. Mining notices and plans of operation could provide approximately 22 access routes annually, while oil and gas or geothermal exploration and access roads could produce approximately two access routes per year.

Access to public land will improve with the acquisition (**THROUGH SALE OR EXCHANGE FROM WILLING SELLERS**) of isolated tracts of private and State trust lands throughout the Resource Area, particularly where small parcels control access **TO PUBLIC LAND**.

Acquisition of lands or easements will generally improve legal and vehicular access while disposal of lands will generally hinder legal access opportunities or potential vehicular access development. Legal access to public land can also be improved by actions of outside agencies, such as easement acquisition by the State Highway Department, or the construction of new county roads.

Linear rights-of-way often provide excellent access routes to or across public land provided the right-of-way access roads are left open to the public. The majority of linear rights-of-way in the Resource Area are for short developments near towns, but occasional linear projects traverse the entire Resource Area or large portions of it, and these projects can create excellent access routes to vast acreages of public land. Of the 40 projected annual linear rights-of-way, only two to four are likely to produce major access routes that will significantly impact the public. Site rights-of-way often require access roads that can also provide excellent access for the public.

Livestock developments can improve or restrict access depending on the method of construction and type of development. Pipeline developments generally improve access as new vehicle routes are created for pipeline construction or maintenance. Fence construction can impede access if provisions are not made to ensure that existing vehicle routes are not blocked. Access can be maintained where such construction is on public land, but not on private or State trust lands. Livestock developments should provide approximately nine access routes per year. Installation of massive fence arrays characteristic of high-intensity short-duration grazing systems will significantly impede access routes unless special mitigation is included in the implementation of the project, such as provision of alternate access routes.

IN SUMMARY, access to and across public land in the Mimbres Resource Area would improve as a result of most minerals actions, land acquisition, right-of-way development, and some livestock developments. Access to and across public land would suffer from certain livestock developments and from loss of access routes through road closures.

LIVESTOCK GRAZING

Oil and gas and geothermal exploration and development and the access roads built in conjunction with these actions would initially cause some interruption in livestock patterns. The animals would adapt after a short period. Mining notices and plans of operation are active programs in the Resource Area. The potential for disrupting livestock patterns in the area is more likely with a longer **ADAPTATION** period depending on the amount of activity **INVOLVED.** Under this alternative, approximately 123 acres would be disturbed on a yearly basis, so impacts would be highly localized. Mineral material sales (salable minerals) are usually **NOT** concentrated in an easily accessible area for the public. If these areas are located within an allotment, the areas and access to these areas could become hazardous to livestock when used frequently. Livestock will normally cease using these areas as the vegetation disappears.

Lands actions include exchanges, sales and acquisition **ON** predetermined areas. If the **ACQUIRED** land becomes part of a grazing allotment, and is determined suitable for grazing by domestic livestock, the number of livestock could be increased on the allotment. By the same token, if land is sold and as a result fenced out of a grazing allotment, the number of livestock grazing that allotment would be reduced. **LEASE AGREEMENTS COULD BE NEGOTIATED BETWEEN LANDOWNERS FOR CONTROL OF THE PROPERTY. FENCING WOULD ALTER LIVESTOCK MOVEMENT AND PATTERNS.** Exchanges usually do not change the status quo of the allotment as the lands are either acquired by the Bureau or another agency and remain within the allotment. The percent **PUBLIC LAND USE** or the amount of revenue paid the Federal government would change with all these actions.

R&PP actions, depending on their purpose, can exclude livestock use. Most of these are small areas of 20 acres or less. These would have little effect on a livestock operation as a whole unless they were located in a key area such as adjacent to a water. Many R&PPs are compatible with livestock use. Linear and site rights-of-way would cause an initial disruption of livestock use patterns while the right-of-way is being constructed. Upon completion of the line or site, normal grazing patterns would resume. The 2920 permits and leases, would cause an initial disruption in livestock patterns for the period of time they were given. Most of these are temporary, and upon removal normal patterns would resume.

New access routes could alter livestock patterns by allowing livestock to move into areas which previously had not been **ACCESSIBLE** for livestock use. Access also allows increased human use which could increase the potential for vandalism and animal harassment.

Livestock grazing would continue in the Resource Area. New activity plans will be developed each year with the completion of the monitoring studies on the I category allotments. This usually includes some type of **DEFERRED GRAZING MANAGEMENT**. This type of **MANAGEMENT** will allow rest during critical plant growth periods. **GRAZING MANAGEMENT** plans would provide for increased ground cover, improved plant vigor, and a steadily improving ecological condition class rating. Range improvements needed to accomplish range management goals set in the activity plans described above include fence construction, water developments, and vegetation manipulation through the use of herbicides or prescribed burning. These improvements would disperse livestock and improve use patterns in the long-term. In the short-term, during the construction stage, livestock patterns could be disrupted. An orientation period will be needed to "introduce" the animals to the new developments. For a more detailed description of the impacts of livestock grazing, see the Southern Rio Grande Grazing Environmental Impact Statement (BLM 1982) and the Las Cruces/Lordsburg Management Framework Plan Amendment/Environmental Impact Statement (MFPA/EIS)(BLM **1984**).

Vegetation sales of native plants in the Resource Area could affect livestock movement with the off-road vehicle use associated with these sales. Yucca **PODS**, from the yucca sale area, are a favorite livestock supplement but are not considered a **KEY** forage plant.

Watershed activities, using water spreaders and wire checks, should improve ground cover and lessen soil loss and as a result improve forage for livestock and other uses. With improved livestock distribution, other areas would receive less impact from livestock grazing.

Wildfires would initially remove all current plant growth and force livestock to use other areas. As the plants respond to the burn, livestock will readily move back into the burned area because of all the new lush green growth. Livestock grazing will need to be deferred and then **GRAZING MANAGEMENT** implemented to give the new growth a chance to reestablish and reproduce. A minimum of 4 inches of new growth is needed **IN TOBOSA AND SACATON AREAS** to ensure plant survival. **IN OTHER BURNED AREAS,** livestock may need to be kept off an area for a few months to several years depending on the vegetation response to the burn.

Animal damage control actions are usually a benefit to livestock as predators are kept within limits. A few young calves are usually lost to coyotes and other predator species each year. The removal of jackrabbits has been shown to have a larger effect on forage production and utilization in many cases than the use made by livestock. This is especially true in a drought year.

Habitat management plans (HMPs) are interdisciplinary and identify wildlife needs in relation to other uses. **CONFLICTS BETWEEN WILDLIFE AND LIVESTOCK ARE USUALLY RESOLVED THROUGH HMPS, OR IN SOME CASES DURING PREPARATION OF GRAZING ACTIVITY PLANS SUCH AS AMPS. IN MOST CASES, THERE ARE NO CONFLICTS BETWEEN PROPERLY MANAGED LIVESTOCK GRAZING AND WILDLIFE. PARTICULAR ATTENTION MUST BE GIVEN TO MEETING THE NEEDS OF WILDLIFE IN CRITICAL HABITAT AREAS, SUCH AS LAMBING AREAS FOR DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP. THIS IS ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH THE USE OF GRAZING SYSTEMS IN COOPERATION WITH THE PERMITTEE THAT PROVIDE FOR BOTH LIVESTOCK AND WILDLIFE NEEDS. IN SOME CASES, THIS MAY MEAN CHANGES IN LIVESTOCK USE PATTERNS OR SEASON OF USE WHERE THERE ARE IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS OR CONFLICTS. MORE INTENSIVE MONITORING IS ALSO USUALLY REQUIRED IN THESE AREAS TO MAKE SURE THAT MUTUAL OBJECTIVES ARE BEING ACCOMPLISHED.** Separate waterings may also need to be developed as diseases may be spread from one species to the other. The continued development of livestock waters has allowed wildlife to stay in more remote areas without having to travel as far for water. Spring developments and umbrella catchments may need to be placed in areas inaccessible to livestock or fenced to prevent livestock from using them. The exclosures are usually small and should not change livestock use patterns. **IF LIVESTOCK ARE WATERING IN THESE SPRING AREAS, WATER WILL BE PROVIDED FOR CATTLE.**

Areas of significant cultural and historical resources (i.e. forts and Indian ruins) with the potential for livestock damage from trampling or rubbing may be excluded from livestock use. Increased human use in and out of these areas also **MAY** disrupt livestock movements.

High use developed recreation areas are fenced or will be fenced from livestock use. Because these areas are small, livestock numbers should remain intact. Facilities needed to work and graze livestock, such as corrals and waters will be placed outside these areas to lessen the potential conflict between humans and livestock. **CONFLICTS WILL CONTINUE BETWEEN RECREATIONAL HUNTING AND LIVESTOCK GRAZING** with livestock movements being disrupted from off-road vehicle use, camping, parking next to livestock facilities, the discharge of firearms, and reports of livestock being shot. Vandalism usually increases during this period, with bullet holes in water tanks, troughs and windmills and fences being cut and gates left open. WSAs , at the present time, limit off-road vehicle use which can cause problems for a **RANCHER IN THEIR DAY-TO-DAY** operation. The designation makes range improvement development and maintenance more difficult and time consuming. Monitoring livestock movements, salting and supplementing, will also be more difficult. Limiting vehicles to existing roads and trails will limit livestock and human interaction.

Riparian and arroyo habitats are fragile areas which attract livestock especially when water is present. The livestock cause **THE MOST DAMAGE IN RIPARIAN AREAS FROM TRAMPLING OR RESTING THAN FROM**

GRAZING BECAUSE THE AREAS ARE USUALLY SMALL. Because of the nature of these areas, especially riparian zones, the potential for improvement is greatest with the removal or at least the rotation **AND MANAGEMENT** of livestock. Livestock can be used as a tool to clear out old growth, change stand structure and open up densely vegetated areas naturally. Fencing, salting and providing additional water outside these areas may be necessary to implement a **DEFERRED** grazing **MANAGEMENT** system.

IN SUMMARY, the overall short-term impacts to livestock grazing would be a result of oil, gas, geothermal, mining actions, R&PPs, rights-of-way, 2920s and vegetation sales through the disruption of livestock patterns. In the long-term, patterns would return to normal. Salable minerals, improved access, bighorn sheep HMPs, cultural and historical areas, developed recreation sites, hunting, WSAs, and riparian and arroyo zones will have short- and long-term impacts to livestock grazing. **THESE IMPACTS COULD CAUSE A SMALL PERMANENT LOSS OF GRAZING IN CERTAIN AREAS.** Livestock activity plans, watershed activities, wildfire, animal damage control **ACTIONS** and most HMPs could impact livestock grazing by mitigating the impacts to and from grazing in the long-term. **THERE** could be short-term impacts from the disruption of grazing patterns.

VEGETATION

Oil and gas activities will cause less than 10 acres of vegetation removal in 5 years. Over the long-term, approximately 30 acres of vegetation will be temporarily lost. All of these acres would be recontoured and reseeded. Successful reclamation measures are highly dependent upon the amount, timeliness and frequency of rainfall. Geothermal permits will cause about 6 acres of vegetation disturbance in the short-term (5 years). Upon development, the long-term temporary vegetation loss is approximately 46 acres. The same revegetation **AND RECLAMATION** stipulations would apply. Mining activities, a more active program in the Resource Area, would remove vegetation on 37.5 acres each year. Long-term notices and plans of operation will clear 110.95 acres of native vegetation. The revegetation and recontour stipulations would apply. Mineral material sales (salables), usually require the removal of vegetation on a much larger scale in one area. Sale areas can be open for years.

Depending on what is removed, the chance of native species returning is somewhat limited. Plants do not reestablish themselves well on rock or the B or C soil horizons. Top soil, in many cases, is stockpiled to be used later in the rehabilitation process. Whenever possible, plants are removed from these areas and made available to the public.

Lands actions, sales, acquisitions and exchanges could have a major impact on vegetation resources. The BLM is required to manage and protect lands under the multiple-use mandate. Land sales and exchanges, in most cases, would remove these lands from this mandate. Community expansion, which entails land development is the primary result of these actions when close to a city. Development activities usually involve clearing, leveling, road and residential development. Many exchanges have resulted in land acquisition by the Bureau which brings these lands and all other acquired lands under the multiple-use and protection mandate.

R&PPs, depending on the actions, can enhance vegetation values when applied to parks or other natural uses of the area. When issued for cemeteries and schools, vegetation is usually removed on a permanent long-term basis from small parcels of land. An average of 20 acres per year is permitted in this manner. Linear rights-of-way, especially transmission lines, will require a short-term vegetation disturbance when the line is under construction. Upon completion, only the maintenance road will cause continued vegetation damage. Pipelines on the other hand, usually require extensive clearing along the route. Roads constitute permanent vegetation removal when used continually. Even after a road has been abandoned, the scar remains indefinitely. Linear rights-of-way disturb and denude about 600 acres per year. Site rights-of-way, mostly communication sites, disturb and remove vegetation on 50 acres per year. Most of these sites are at the higher elevations where little soil is present. Vegetation reestablishment is very slow. The 2920 permits and leases are usually done for a specific period of time and in the case of apiaries and movie sets cause minimal vegetation removal.

Increased access will cause loss of vegetation along the length of the access (road). If the access is not bladed consistently, vegetation will grow between the tire tracks and vegetation loss will be minimal.

Livestock grazing, when not managed properly, can have a long-term effect on vegetation. The implementation of five new activity plans per year, which will incorporate the principles of **GRAZING** rotation management will allow the vegetation rest during key growth periods. As the grazing permittees **AND LESSEES WITHIN THE RESOURCE AREA IMPLEMENT** these plans, the vegetation resource and ecological **RANGE** condition should improve. Range improvements needed to make these grazing systems work are fences, pipelines, troughs and storage tanks. Initial vegetation removal will be less than 25 acres per year. Long-term effects should be improved plant vigor, increased ground cover and a long-term improvement in ecological **RANGE** condition. All new watering areas will have a small sacrifice area where livestock will congregate and cause soil compaction **AND LOSS OF VEGETATION.** Prescribed fires will rejuvenate the grass species burned and set invading shrub species back to an earlier successional stage. For further discussion on the impacts of livestock grazing, see the **SOUTHERN RIO GRANDE GRAZING EIS (BLM 1981) AND THE LAS CRUCES/LORDSBURG MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN AMENDMENT/EIS (BLM 1984).**

Vegetation sales of native plants usually entails about 500 plants being removed each year for landscaping purposes, generally with good survival rates. The areas the plants are legally removed from are either land disposal areas or areas where resource damage would be minimal. Illegal removal of native plants is an increasing problem in the Resource Area.

Watershed activities would have a beneficial impact on vegetation and vegetation management by providing ways to stabilize soils until the vegetation has had a chance to reestablish. This could be accomplished through the use of wire checks, water spreaders and grazing management.

Wildfire, in the short-term, would remove all old and new growth on the plant. Fire is a natural stimulator and plants usually respond immediately even without precipitation. Fires, in the long-term, are usually a benefit to the native vegetation (Wright and Bailey 1982). They remove old decadent growth which can inhibit plant growth and provide needed nutrients for plant reproduction.

HMPs are developed for wildlife. They identify key vegetation types for a particular wildlife species and outline ways to improve these types. HMPs will balance the wildlife use with other uses to improve these vegetation types. Spring developments and umbrella catchments will cause minimal vegetation loss. Exclosures will protect the vegetation within from other grazing uses.
Developed recreational use areas are usually high visitor use areas. Vegetation removal for parking lots, trails, and picnic areas is permanent and would impact less than 100 acres. Developed sites channel visitor use into "hardened" areas to prevent damage to adjacent areas. Developed sites through displays and signs, expose and educate the public on the importance of the environment. The current management and implementation of the Organ Mountain Coordinated Resource Management Plan would cause some short- and long-term vegetation loss as areas are developed for more intensive recreation use. These intensive use areas in the long-term would lessen the impacts on the surrounding areas. Limiting people to existing "roads and trails" would minimize the damage to the vegetation resource. WSA designations provide an extra measure of protection by limiting vehicle use. The maintenance of the vegetation in its **NATURAL** state is one of the objectives in wilderness management.

Riparian and arroyo habitats are critical vegetation zones. Because all the elements needed to improve the status quo are present (water, soil, and sunshine), these zones will improve quickly when managed properly. Grazing use should only be allowed during part of the year or excluded altogether until the vegetation goals are met.

IN SUMMARY, livestock grazing if not managed properly would have the largest short- and long-term impacts to the vegetation resources

CAUSING VEGETATION DAMAGE AND LOSS. Livestock activity plans, watershed plans, and proper management of riparian and arroyo habitats will benefit the vegetation resources through management and protection in the long-term. There could be short-term impacts from some of the above actions due to vegetation removal to implement new plans and systems.

SOIL/AIR/WATER

Soil

Exploration and development of mineral resources by activities such as trenching, drilling, levelling, site clearing, and construction of access roads would cause soil disturbance on 123 acres per year.

Lands identified for disposal would be subject to soil surface disturbance from activities such as clearing, levelling, and construction. The lands would be the responsibility of State and local governments. Any soil loss from accelerated erosion would be irretrievable. Types of activities on acquired lands would be limited and managed to protect the soil resource.

The impacts on soil from livestock grazing as analyzed in the Southern Rio Grande EIS (BLM 1981) and Las Cruces/Lordsburg MFPA (BLM 1984) were long-term increased ground cover, decreased rangeland in poor ecological condition, increased production of desirable forage species, reduced sediment yield, and reduced wind erosion.

Existing rights-of-way could be subject to surface and shallow subsurface soil disturbance from any new construction and maintenance activities, and increased activity within the rights-of-way by vehicle use.

Developing new vehicle access into unaccessible areas could involve surface disturbing activities such as road construction. New road construction could increase the soil susceptibility to wind and water erosion at least during construction activities.

Vegetation treatments such as chemical brush control and prescribed burning expose the top soil to short-term erosion hazards from water and wind. The erosion potential exists until the sites are revegetated (usually 1-3 years depending on the site and precipitation).

Sale of vegetation allows for digging at five specific locations and some off road travel on small parcels of land. Approximately 500 plants will be removed disturbing approximately .05 acres per year.

Continued implementation of existing HMPs, generally limits or restricts surface disturbing activities within these areas. Habitat improvement projects will disturb approximately ½ acre per year.

Existing recreation areas at Dripping Springs Natural Area and Aguirre Spring Recreation Area have designated and maintained campgrounds, picnic grounds and hiking trails. These designated areas limit impacts to the soil resource. The remainder of the Resource Area is subject to unrestricted recreation uses, and the soil resource may be affected by hiking, camping and other activities on unmaintained sites where use is concentrated (such as hunting camps). However, these activities tend to be of short duration (several days per year).

IN SUMMARY, the soil resource would benefit from acquisition of lands continued implementation of existing HMPs, recreation planning, vegetation treatments, and areas excluded from grazing. Activities **OCCURRING ON DISPOSAL LAND SUCH AS** vehicle access, right-of-way corridor use, mineral activity, and vegetation sale areas would cause soil surface disturbance.

Air

Exploration and development of mineral resources would result in surface disturbances such as trenching, drilling, and in some cases construction of access roads on 123 acres per year. **THIS** would reduce air quality from dust on these areas while these activities are being conducted. If fluid mineral development occurs, air quality reduction from escaping fumes associated with these activities would occur near the activity.

Lands identified for disposal would not be managed by the BLM. Restrictions on activities would be the responsibility of State and local governments. Activities such as clearing, levelling,

and construction may affect air quality by the increase of dust in the air. Improved manageability of acquired lands would restrict activities which may contribute to a reduction of air quality.
Construction and use of vehicle access would increase dust levels in the air where such activity occurs.

Vegetation treatments would have short-term impacts on air quality. Brush control and prescribed burns expose surface soil to wind erosion which causes dust, while smoke from prescribed fires would reduce localized air quality until dispersed.

IN SUMMARY, disposal of lands, increased vehicle access, **MINERAL EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT,** and vegetation treatments would affect air quality in localized areas by the increase of dust in the air. With the exception of fluid mineral development activities, the other air quality reductions would be short-term, either during activity or in the case of vegetation treatments 1 to 3 years until regrowth occurs.

Water

Under continuing management, watershed management would largely be accomplished through coordination with other programs and as a part of all surface disturbing actions. The only existing site-specific activity plan dealing with soil and water resources is the Gila River Coordinated Resource Management Plan. Provisions of this plan would continue to be implemented. This plan benefits the watershed by protecting the surface vegetation which reduces erosion and maintains or improves water quality by reducing the silt load of the river. Other projects which would occur throughout the remainder of the Resource Area will be considered for watershed sensitivity in the affected areas on a site-specific basis. All surface disturbing actions will require appropriate reclamation measures.

Vegetation treatments consisting of prescribed burns and chemical brush control projects will enhance vegetation ground cover which will reduce erosion and allow greater percolation of water into the soil.

Elimination of grazing on 7,826 acres, including the Gila Lower Box, Red Rock Game Farm, Central Peloncillo Mountains (**SCHOLES AND OWL CANYON**), and the Organ Mountains will enhance and protect vegetation ground cover, reduce erosion, and increase percolation of water into the ground.

IN SUMMARY, watersheds within the Gila River Coordinated Resource Management Plan, vegetation treatment areas, and areas excluded from grazing would not be subjected to surface vegetation loss, increased soil erosion or excessive surface runoff. Surface vegetation would increase which would hold the soil and increase percolation of water into the ground.

WILDLIFE

Exploration and development of mineral resources could displace wildlife and reduce wildlife habitat on 123 acres per year. In areas where habitat is limited, surface disturbance activities would decrease the amount of available habitat and disturb wildlife during critical times such as breeding, fawning and lambing, or interfere with travel routes and feeding areas.

Land disposal near urban areas would result in a loss of wildlife habitat from surface disturbances and developments. On small scattered parcels located away from urban centers, isolated areas of island habitats may be altered or disturbed from activities occurring on that land. The acquisition and consolidation of lands would add additional diverse habitats to the public land. These acquisitions can then be managed to protect or enhance the wildlife resource.

The impacts on wildlife from livestock grazing as analyzed in the Southern Rio Grande EIS (BLM 1981) and Las Cruces/Lordsburg MFPA/EIS (BLM 1984) were increased habitat and wildlife diversity and increased forage for big game.

Vegetation treatments such as prescribed burning and chemical brush control would alter wildlife habitat by creating increased vegetation diversity, and reduced erosion on wildlife habitat (Wright 1982). After a vegetation treatment there will be short-term loss of wildlife feed and cover, and temporary (several hours to days) displacement of animals. These impacts will diminish over time as vegetation regrowth and re-establishment occurs. The continued implementation of existing HMPs will allow for restrictions on types and quantity of activities which could occur on areas which have sensitive species and their habitats. Continued implementation of HMPs will protect and enhance wildlife habitat.

IN SUMMARY, disposal of lands and exploration and development of mineral resources would affect wildlife habitat through habitat disturbances. Land disposal would affect wildlife habitats over fairly large areas, while mineral development activities would affect only small, localized areas. Implementation of existing HMPs and vegetation treatments would enhance or alter wildlife habitat over large areas.

CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Ground disturbance related to mining activity that can affect cultural **AND PALEONTOLOGICAL** resources includes but is not limited to, blasting, construction of new access roads, creation of staging areas, core drilling, and trenching with heavy machinery. Any degradation of cultural **AND PALEONTOLOGICAL** resources would result in irreversible and irretrievable losses of information.

ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH SALABLE MINERALS MAY CAUSE DIRECT IMPACTS TO VERTEBRATE FOSSILS. PLIOCENE AND PLEISTOCENE FOSSILS ARE COMMONLY FOUND IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY-FILL AND TERRACE DEPOSITS WHICH ARE USED FOR SAND AND GRAVEL OPERATIONS. OTHER GEOLOGIC FORMATIONS, EXPLOITED FOR BUILDING STONE AND AGGREGATES, ALSO CONTAIN IMPORTANT FOSSIL DEPOSITS SUCH AS THE RECENTLY DISCOVERED PALEOZOIC TRACKWAY SITE IN THE ROBLEDO MOUNTAINS. WITH A MODERATE TO HIGH POTENTIAL FOR SALABLE MINERALS ON 266,700 ACRES OF FEDERAL MINERAL ESTATE, THERE IS GREAT POTENTIAL FOR IMPACTS TO PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES IN THESE PORTIONS OF THE MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA WHICH WOULD RESULT IN IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE LOSS OF INFORMATION.

Acquisition or disposal of land can cause varied impacts to cultural **AND PALEONTOLOGICAL** resources. For example, acquisition of a significant Apachean site or Paleoindian camp or kill site would enhance the diversity of sites within the Mimbres Resource Area since few sites of this type are currently documented.

Impacts to cultural resources eligible for the National Register located within lands identified for disposal are mitigated through excavation and other methods. These mitigative efforts result in determinations of "no adverse effect through data recovery." However, these data recovery methods treat only portions of sites and some data is lost. Modern excavation techniques **MAY** be considered primitive by future researchers. **IN ADDITION, PROTECTION OF POTENTIALLY IMPORTANT PALEONTOLOGICAL SITES WOULD NOT BE GUARANTEED, AND SCIENTIFIC SPECIMENS AND DATA COULD BE LOST.**

The effects of vegetation use through livestock grazing are generally low, except where conditions combine to concentrate cattle. Proximity to water, certain types of forage, natural barriers, or fences can result in channeling cattle to result in intensive trampling of **FOSSILS,** artifacts and archeological features, as well as increased site erosion.

There are currently four Holistic Range Management (HRM) systems in the Mimbres Resource Area. One HRM objective is to increase cattle hoof action for soil aeration and reseeding. It is suspected that hoof action is damaging to cultural artifacts and features. Hoof action can break **AND DISPLACE ARTIFACTS AND FOSSILS,** disturb cultural features **AND FOSSIL SITES,** and cause additional impacts of this nature. Archaeological studies of HRM systems are planned in consultation with the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). The 5-year studies will monitor the effects of trampling on cultural resources within the HRM systems.

Protection of riparian areas in many cases reduces erosion of archeological sites. Riparian areas typically have high concentrations of historic and prehistoric sites which can be damaged by erosion.

IN SUMMARY, acquisition of significant cultural sites enhances the diversity of sites within the Mimbres Resource Area. Disposal of significant sites reduces site diversity on the Mimbres Resource Area and can result in the loss of important site data. Effects of livestock grazing are generally low level except where livestock are concentrated and trampling impacts occur to artifacts and features. Protection of riparian areas can reduce erosion at associated cultural sites.

RECREATION

Lands actions will enhance recreation quality for urbanites when parks are created on lands disposed of for community expansion including R&PP parcels. Some school facilities on R&PP lands will also provide expanded recreation facilities such as soccer fields, basketball courts, and playgrounds. Disposal of lands near cities will make many recreation opportunities more accessible, with houses adjacent to public land having backyard opportunities for walking, bike or horse riding, and numerous other activities. Acquisition of lands by the BLM will enhance recreation opportunities and management on the public land by reducing boundaries between public and non-public lands and subsequent potential conflicts between recreationists and other landowners. Public acquisition of key parcels in special recreation management areas such as the Gila Lower Box and Fort Cummings will not only reduce potential conflicts but will provide more alternatives for recreation facility development.

Recreation users will benefit from improved access as a result of new construction of access roads associated with mineral exploration and development, livestock developments, and right-of-way access roads. With improved access, opportunities for dispersed recreation such as hunting, hiking, driving, and camping will increase annually. The quality of many recreational activities will also improve, both because of dispersal of recreationists over more public land and because new areas will be opened up, some of which will have higher quality of recreation resources than existing areas. For example, new sites may become accessible for rockhounding that provide specimens that are unavailable or that are better than similar rocks available elsewhere.

Livestock grazing can have both beneficial and detrimental effects on recreation. Most vehicle access routes to or across public land involve ranch roads, and many recreationists such as hikers and hunters use windmills or other livestock facilities for orientation when they are in the field. Cattle trails are often good starting points for recreationists, especially in thorny brush or mountainous terrain. Livestock grazing can benefit wildlife-based recreation by dispersing water sources and allowing for increased habitat diversity, particularly where rotational grazing systems are used. Some recreationists prefer to not have cattle disturb their solitude, and consider cattle to hinder their appreciation of the natural world while other recreationists may enjoy the sight of cattle in the outdoors. Once again, rotational grazing systems maintain both types of opportunity on a grazing allotment at all times.

Vegetation treatments will have long-term impacts to wildlife-based recreation opportunities by increasing ecotonal habitats and diversity of habitat types, and improving production of forage and wildlife.

Watershed management will improve soil stability, impacting vehicle recreation by reducing damage to roads and trails. Soil stabilization and subsequent vegetation recovery will allow increased opportunities for certain recreational pursuits such as pronghorn hunting, which are dependant on maintenance of stable, good condition grasslands. Rockhounding quality may decrease as vegetation cover rebounds on treated watersheds.

The quality of hunting and non-consumptive wildlife recreation such as bird watching and wildlife photography will improve as wildlife habitat is improved by prescribed burning, spring developments, water catchments, and enclosures. Wildfires will also improve the quality of hunting and other wildlife-based recreation by increasing habitat diversity and rejuvenating vegetation. Cumulatively, these developments will gradually improve wildlife habitat diversity and subsequent wildlife recreation quality throughout the Resource Area.

Recreation resources will benefit from ongoing cultural and paleontological resource management, particularly the development and interpretation of the Dripping Springs Natural Area, La Cueva, Fort Cummings, and the Paleozoic Trackways Site. New public recreation opportunities will continue to arise, and existing opportunities will improve in quality as these and other sites are developed. Protection of the majority of sites will maintain the potential for recreational enjoyment of these resources into the future.

Riparian habitat management would produce excellent benefits to recreation opportunities, both by allowing reestablishment of riparian communities that support the highest wildlife species diversity, and by improving the quality of riparian habitat-related recreation. Bird watching and other forms of non-consumptive wildlife recreation as well as hunting and fishing will improve in riparian areas as stream banks are stabilized, and vegetation species and structural diversity increase. Riparian habitat recovery will benefit hunting on lands near riparian areas as well, since numerous wildlife species use riparian areas as a portion of their habitat.

IN SUMMARY, recreation opportunities will change on disposed lands from undeveloped recreation such as hunting and mountain biking to developed recreation including city park-related recreation such as sports and playground play plus other forms of urban recreation like road biking. Acquisition of lands and access plus right-of-way development will benefit both dispersed and developed recreation on public land by making more land available for both types of recreation on public land. Watershed management, fire management, wildlife habitat management, and riparian habitat management will improve the availability and quality of backpacking, camping, sightseeing, hunting, picnicking, wildlife photography, bird watching, and other forms of dispersed recreation. Fire management, wildlife habitat management, wilderness management, and riparian management can all detract from rockhounding quality over time.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Visual resources will be degraded by minerals actions including leasable, locatable, and salable mineral exploration and development. Leasable and salable mineral exploration and development activities are most likely to occur in intermountain basins where VRM classes are generally III or IV. Class III areas allow moderate changes in the basic visual elements, while Class IV areas allow changes in the basic visual elements to dominate the natural landscape; so leasable and salable activities over most of the Resource Area will not conflict with VRM Classes. Furthermore, most of the hills and mountains in the Resource Area, which reclassified as VRM Class II, are closed to leasing and have low potential for oil and gas development because of the thick layers of rock above any potential oil-bearing deposits. Areas within a few miles of the Mesilla Valley that are in VRM Class II have high potential for geothermal resource development, which would have impacts on scenic panoramas of the public land from Las Cruces. Locatable mineral exploration and development are much more likely to conflict with VRM guidelines and cause detrimental impacts to visual resources, by altering landforms, creating contrasts in colors of scenic viewpoints, and altering vegetal texture and color. First, locatable minerals are most likely to occur in quantity along limestone/igneous interfaces, commonly in hills, which are generally VRM Class II areas where changes in the basic visual elements should not be evident. Second, locatable mineral exploration and development under the 1872 mining law require only a notice to conduct mineral exploration, and **CAN OCCUR EVEN IF THE ACTION CAUSES DISTURBANCE TO VISUAL RESOURCES.** Third, very little of the Resource Area is closed to locatable mineral entry.

Lands actions will have both detrimental and beneficial effects on visual resources. Disposal of lands will end the BLM's ability to manage those lands for visual resources, but most of the disposal lands in the Resource Area are VRM Class III or IV. Acquisition of lands will conversely allow the BLM to manage larger blocks of land under VRM guidelines, particularly scenic hilly areas where isolated parcels of currently non-Federal land may be developed in ways that detract from the scenic quality of large acreages of adjacent public land. Rights-of-way will be planned so as to minimize and mitigate effects on visual resources by avoiding or circumventing sensitive scenic areas, or by including rehabilitation and reclamation in project planning.

Development of access routes to or across public land will not have significant adverse impacts on visual resources because any planned access routes can be designed to avoid and mitigate disturbance of the basic visual elements in the landscape. Additionally, the majority of projected developments that will include access routes will occur in VRM Class III or IV areas, as VRM, Class I or II lands will be ROW exclusion or avoidance areas.

Livestock grazing can have profound influences on both color and texture of visual resources. Removal of vegetation by livestock can change the color of the landscape from that of the dominant vegetation to that of the soil. The landscape texture can be altered as livestock grazing changes vegetation types from grassland to bare ground, dunes, or shrublands. Different grazing levels can lead to fenceline contrasts **BY** causing **CHANGES TO** colors and textures in the landscape.

Vegetation treatments can return ground cover to barren areas and allow replacement of shrubs with grasses. Although vegetation treatments will be planned and can create short-term visual contrasts by killing brush, vegetation treatments will allow improvement in vegetal cover and resultant scenic quality. Vegetation treatments will be planned and conducted to minimize sharp lines that would delineate treatment boundaries.

Watershed management plans will provide direction for recovery of vegetation resources that will result in more natural appearances of visual resources in the Resource Area, particularly on hills where key viewing areas are large. Mountain ranges such as the Cooke's Range which have large areas with soil erosion problems will appear more natural, and visual resources will be greatly enhanced.

Wildfires and prescribed burning can cause alterations in visual resources over short periods of time, particularly while fires are burning and shortly thereafter. After fires burn, the native vegetation will return in a more vigorous state than the pre-burn condition, and the landscape will benefit over the long-term.

Recreation developments can have slight adverse impacts on visual resources, but will be planned to blend closely with existing landscapes and avoid any changes in the form, line, texture, and color of the landscape. The locations, forms, color, and texture of any recreation developments will be planned to conform closely with the natural appearances of the public land.

Wildlife habitat management, wilderness management, special status species management, and riparian habitat management will all improve the natural appearance of the landscapes on public land.

IN SUMMARY, any surface or vegetation disturbing action, in hills areas, could degrade visual resources and will require careful project planning to conform with VRM Class II guidelines. However, many actions can occur over most of the Resource Area within the existing VRM Class III and IV guidelines.

WILDERNESS

Mineral development could occur in WSAs and wilderness areas on unpatented mining claims subject to the mining laws. Such mining would degrade wilderness quality by disrupting the naturalness, solitude, and opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Recontouring after any mining operations could be required to protect the landscape, and reclamation bonds could be required to ensure that necessary reclamation work is completed. Mineral leasing in WSAs and wilderness areas would not likely be authorized. Mineral leasing would also disrupt the naturalness, solitude, and opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Mineral **SALES** for common variety minerals would not be allowed in a WSA or wilderness area.

Land acquisition would have beneficial effects on wilderness resources and management by enabling the BLM to consolidate Federal ownership in wilderness areas. Acquisition would ensure that any uses of those lands would be compatible with the maintenance of the wilderness resource. Wilderness lands would not be disposed.

Increased access opportunities to wilderness areas could increase human impacts on these areas, and will have to be carefully monitored to ensure that Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) thresholds are not surpassed. Improved access will enable more recreationists to use wilderness areas, and increased access routes can be used to disperse users more evenly around wilderness areas, enhancing opportunities for solitude among wilderness users.

Livestock grazing can detract from wilderness qualities. Livestock facilities are often highly visible from large viewsheds, and the presence of facilities, cattle, or evidence of grazing use can reduce the appearance of naturalness within a portion of a wilderness area. Cattle can also affect the solitude of wilderness users. Although livestock grazing is allowed to occur within WSAs and wilderness areas, cattle are exotic components of the ecosystem and support facilities are human imprints in natural areas. Careful management of grazing practices can minimize adverse effects on the natural environment. In some cases, livestock management practices can be used to improve the natural conditions of an area. In already modified environments, better livestock distribution, seasons of use, fencing and land treatments can be used to bring about improvement over existing unnatural conditions.

Fire management can beneficially impact wilderness resources by renewing plant growth and leading to increases in natural biological diversity as vegetation composition and structure are altered. Most wildfires in natural areas will require only limited suppression efforts, as grasses make up the major fuel types, and most wilderness areas within the Resource Area will be surrounded by shrublands that do not have sufficient fuel loads to carry fires. Prescribed burning could be used in wilderness areas to enhance or maintain fire dependant ecosystems.

Wildlife habitat management will only be allowed in wilderness areas if it enhances wilderness values. Although some management efforts such as water developments may be noticeable from small areas within a wilderness, design and location of such developments can be planned to mitigate any impacts to wilderness resources, while the far-reaching effects of such developments will enhance wilderness values such as wildlife and endangered species over large areas. Enhancement of wildlife habitat within wilderness areas will provide long-term benefits to natural values and result in recreation opportunities.

Recreation management will enhance wilderness resources by ensuring that vehicles stay on designated routes, and providing parking areas and access routes outside of wilderness areas so that recreationists can enjoy the wilderness without causing degradation of wilderness values. Recreation management will be the main tool for ensuring that non-consumptive uses of wilderness conform to wilderness management policy and guidelines and do not degrade wilderness values.

IN SUMMARY, mineral development in wilderness areas could degrade wilderness values by disturbing natural systems and scenic quality, but such actions should be mitigated because of the existing wilderness management policy. Lands actions would benefit wilderness values by consolidating ownership and management. Livestock grazing management could enhance or detract from wilderness values on a case by case basis, and possibly have both effects simultaneously on disparate portions of a wilderness area. Access development and fire, wildlife habitat, and recreation management would be the primary tools for enhancing natural qualities of wilderness areas

SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES (T&E)

MOST MINERAL EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES OCCUR UNDER A MINING NOTICE (SURFACE DISTURBANCE OF 5 ACRES OR LESS). ALTHOUGH THE BLM HAS NO DISCRETIONARY AUTHORITY TO APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE NOTICE LEVEL ACTIVITIES, CLAIMANTS AND OPERATORS ARE LEGALLY OBLIGATED TO ABIDE BY THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT WHILE CONDUCTING ACTIVITIES ON FEDERAL CLAIMS. THEY MUST ENSURE ALL OPERATIONS ARE CONDUCTED TO PREVENT UNNECESSARY AND UNDUE DEGRADATION OF THE FEDERAL LANDS, AND SHALL COMPLY WITH ALL PERTINENT FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS. DURING THE COURSE OF OPERATIONS, THE BLM HAS REGULATORY AUTHORITY TO PREVENT ADVERSE IMPACTS TO THREATENED OR ENDANGERED SPECIES

AND THEIR HABITATS WHICH MAY BE AFFECTED UNDER A NOTICE (43 CFR 3809.2-2(d)). MINING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED ON MORE THAN 5 ACRES REQUIRE A PLAN OF OPERATIONS FOR WHICH NEPA REQUIRES ANALYSIS BY AN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT. ANY POTENTIAL AFFECTS TO THREATENED OR ENDANGERED SPECIES WILL BE MITIGATED THROUGH THIS PROCESS.

Acquisition of lands would improve manageability by blocking up land and may provide additional special status species habitat as well as provide a buffer area near sensitive habitat types.

Livestock grazing on habitats for special status animal species (such as bighorn sheep) could result in habitat disturbance. Livestock grazing on habitats for special status plant species could also result in habitat disturbance (from grazing or trampling). Most listed plant species are not preferred livestock forage (many are cacti). Properly managed grazing should have little or no detrimental effect on special status species. In areas where conflicts between special status species and livestock grazing are identified through monitoring, actions would be taken to reduce or eliminate adverse impacts to those species.

The continued implementation of existing HMPs would limit the scope and extent of activities which occur in areas with special status species.

IN SUMMARY, acquisition of lands and management of existing HMPs could enhance special status species and their habitats. Mineral development activities may have detrimental effects on special status species and their habitats.

RIPARIAN AND ARROYO HABITATS

Even though these areas would be avoided, exploration and development of mineral resources could cause surface disturbing activities in small localized areas. Construction, levelling, trenching, and mining or drilling would result in removal of vegetation, affect streamside stability, and potentially reduce water quality.

Improved manageability of acquired lands would protect and enhance riparian resources by restricting the type and amount of activity which may occur.

Vegetation treatments limited to prescribed burning will stimulate growth resulting in a healthier, vegetationally diverse riparian and arroyo habitat areas (Wright 1982).

The continuing implementation of existing habitat management plans which have riparian areas will limit the type and quantity of activities which occur near riparian areas within HMP boundaries.

The development and implementation of recreation plans could result in recreational activities being limited in scope and extent to designated areas near riparian areas.

Elimination or management of livestock grazing in riparian and arroyo habitat areas would result in increased vegetation growth and diversity, improved water quality, streambank stability, and decreased soil erosion.

IN SUMMARY, acquisition of lands, recreation planning, management of existing HMPs, and vegetation treatments would benefit riparian and arroyo habitat areas. Mineral activities and grazing activities may disturb or degrade riparian and arroyo habitat areas.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Mineral exploration will continue to be a significant activity in the Mimbres Resource Area. Surface disturbance from these activities could impact other resource uses and reduce the value of the lands impacted. Lands may be withdrawn from mineral lease and exploration in order to protect other resource values; the resulting closures to mineral exploration and leasing may have negative impacts on the economic base.

Although the activity of the minerals industry has been reduced by economic factors, the contribution of this industry is still significant, and will continue to provide income and employment in the Mimbres Resource Area.

The BLM will continue its policy of acquiring and disposing of public land in order to enhance administration and to provide land for private ownership where this is desirable. The continuing policy direction is to offer public land in the Las Cruces area for exchange or sale in order to accommodate urban growth. This will have positive economic effects by increasing the property tax base in Dona Ana County, and by reducing development pressure on agricultural land. The availability of this land will create new opportunities for economic growth and development. Some possible negative effects are the eventual loss of grazing on the land as it is developed and conflicts between urban development and mineral materials. The value of the land for development will greatly exceed grazing and mineral values, so these losses are considered to be insignificant. Land acquisitions are primarily accomplished thorough exchange with private owners or the State Land Office for the purposes of obtaining access to isolated public land, or for protecting significant resource values. These actions can be beneficial to the economy by allowing recreational or permittee entry to previously inaccessible lands and by permitting more efficient management of resources.

Land withdrawals from multiple-use are another significant activity. Withdrawals may be made for the purpose of protecting significant resources and for public health and safety. There may be some negative economic impacts which result from the loss of mineral development opportunities or grazing leases or permits; however, the social benefit that results from the withdrawals can be significant (see Table 2-8).

The BLM will continue the policy of granting rights-of-way on public land for qualified applicants. The use of rights-of-way for utilities and other purposes has a large, but diffuse impact on the local economy. Some land **VALUES COULD** be increased **BY THEIR** value through proximity to power and other rights-of-way. In certain cases, some negative effects may be caused through construction or use of rights-of-way. These could include soil erosion, reduction in visual quality, and reduction in adjacent property values. Other types of rights-of-way or permits are for facilities such as communications sites, hot mix bituminous plants, and agricultural uses, such as apiaries. These uses may cause negative effects to the extent that they interfere with other resource uses; however, there are significant economic benefits.

The requirements for access to public land are determined through the planning process. Access to public land will increase recreation and use of resources and provide benefits to the economy. Access is acquired through land exchange or purchase of easements. Significant costs may be incurred by the government during the acquisition of easements. Some landowners will benefit from these expenditures.

There are 347 livestock grazing **PERMITS OR** leases in the Mimbres Resource Area. At the present time, 385,282 animal unit months (AUMs) **OF ACTIVE GRAZING USE ARE LICENSED ON PUBLIC** land in the Mimbres Resource Area, and an additional 4,595 AUMs are in the inactive or suspensed **NONUSE CATEGORY**. Approximately 45 percent of the range beef produced in the Mimbres Resource Area is produced on public land, for an average value of $11 million per year. The economic importance of livestock grazing is concentrated in the smaller communities of the Resource Area, where it may constitute a significant portion of the total economy. The range livestock industry is a traditional activity in the non-irrigated portions of the Mimbres Resource Area, and has remained a significant part of the culture in the entire region.

Livestock use adjustments will be made as required to prevent resource damage or to utilize forage more efficiently. These adjustments are not expected to have major effects on livestock production or on agricultural income in the Resource Area. Rangeland monitoring studies will continue to be the basis for designing improvements and making livestock use adjustments.

Vegetation sales will continue in the Mimbres Resource Area. The social value of plants for "desert landscaping" is important for local ambiance and water conservation. The economic effects of vegetation sales are insignificant to the total economy.

CONTINUING MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE

The majority of the activities which protect soils, air, and water involve control and rehabilitation of surface disturbing activities in mining, construction, and rangeland improvement projects. This may involve higher costs to the permittees, although these costs are not generally high in relation to the value of the project. Watershed management may require modifications in grazing practices and reductions in livestock production.

The BLM will continue current policies of fire management. This is beneficial to the extent that resources and improvements are protected. A small amount of employment is generated through fire prevention and suppression activities.

Wildlife habitat protection is significant to the social and economic conditions in the Mimbres Resource Area. Hunting and wildlife appreciation make a significant contribution to the local economy. The presence of wildlife contributes an intangible benefit to the ecology and character of the area.

Six HMPs will be maintained as part of the continuing management in the Resource Area. Implementation of HMP goals may cause conflicts with other resource uses, such as livestock grazing and mining; however, the economic consequences of these conflicts are slight compared to the value of preserving habitat and populations of sensitive species.

The goals of BLM policy are to manage cultural and paleontological resources in a manner that protects and provides for their proper use. The great value of these resources is for education and research. They represent a store of knowledge that can never be reclaimed once it is lost. A growing number of tourists and visitors are attracted to cultural sites. Some sites in the Resource Area have great interpretive potential. Tourism associated with these sites would be an economic benefit to local communities. There may also be conflicts with other resource uses which cause negative economic impacts. These are generally not significant in comparison to the cultural and economic values which protection and interpretation of sites provide.

The major cultural and paleontological resource activities in the Resource Area are inventory, evaluation, and protection of cultural and paleontological resources, and resource stabilization. These are accomplished through cultural resource management plans. Employment generated from these activities produces direct economic benefits, and there are long-term social benefits from the preservation of scientific and historic knowledge.

The BLM provides recreational opportunity to a growing population in the Mimbres Resource Area. Developed sites will continue to be operated in the Organ Mountains. Dispersed recreation is available throughout the Resource Area. The New Mexico State Planning Office has identified multi-purpose and day-use recreation areas within l-hour's travel time of urban areas as the greatest need for the recreation future. The demands for recreation are quite significant and will continue to grow as the population of the Resource Area becomes concentrated in the urban and suburban areas of the Rio Grande Corridor. A wider population, including El Paso, Texas and Juarez, Mexico, will continue to seek a broad spectrum of recreation opportunity in the Resource Area. The increased demand for recreation will cause conflicts with other resource users and demands for access to public land. The result of these conflicts may be economic losses to some resource uses while recreation based activities provide economic benefits to other segments of the economy.

The social and economic benefit of the visual resource is real, but difficult to quantify. The cultural images of our society are strongly influenced by the visual character of the landscape, and property values can be influenced by the quality of visual resources. Management goals for visual resources are to protect the most outstanding visual resources and to restrict activities which have undue adverse effects in other areas. This can cause some conflicts with certain resource uses and may restrict activities in certain areas.

BLM policy is to protect habitat for sensitive, rare, and endangered species. This is done by evaluating the impact of all proposed actions on these species and by implementing appropriate management to protect habitat. The benefit of maintaining biological diversity, and the native complement of species in the Resource Area is difficult to assess. Some negative economic effects may be caused by eliminating activities at increased cost to permittees or other users.

Riparian areas are extremely limited in size and extent in the Resource Area, yet they are significant for wildlife, the maintenance of water quality and stream flow, and forage production. The BLM goals are to preserve these values thorough management. This may cause negative economic impacts on some resource uses thorough limitations of activities in riparian habitats.

IN SUMMARY, the BLM will continue to provide opportunities for minerals exploration and leasing, livestock grazing, vegetation sales, rights-of-way, and other leases through the provisions of legislation and Department of Interior regulations. There will be continuing land ownership adjustments to improve the efficiency of public land management, to provide land needed for public use, and to meet the growing requirements for private ownership. Wildlife, including sensitive species and critical habitat areas will continue to receive the protection required by Federal statutes and regulations. There will be continuing wildland fire management, and protection of the watershed, soil and air resources as required by Federal statutes and regulations. Recreation activities will be provided to the public, and there will be continuing efforts to protect cultural and paleontological resources. Visual quality management will be a high priority in the Resource Area. WSAs will be protected in their present state until Congress makes a determination of their status.

MINERALS

Fluid Leasable Minerals

OIL AND GAS

The land identified for disposal has low potential for the occurrence and development of oil and gas so the loss of these fluid minerals from public ownership would be insignificant.

Land identified for the acquisition of vehicular access and land adjacent to these areas has low potential for the occurrence and development of oil and gas. Consequently, new opportunities for exploration on this land would be insignificant.

ABOUT 29,000 ACRES OF LAND HAVING MODERATE OIL AND GAS POTENTIAL WOULD BE UNAVAILABLE FOR LEASING AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE BIG HATCHET MOUNTAINS ACEC.

Table 4-2 lists the acreage of public land that would be available under **THE PROPOSED PLAN** for oil and gas development in comparison to the oil and gas potential.

GEOTHERMAL

Land identified for disposal in the vicinity of Las Cruces contains 14,000 acres of high geothermal potential and 19,000 acres of moderate geothermal potential. Respectively, this represents about 24 percent of the total high potential lands and 7 percent of the moderate potential lands. The transfer of these lands out of Federal ownership would preclude the opportunity for public leasing and development of these geothermal resources. Retaining the mineral estate in Federal ownership could lead to potential split-estate conflicts if the surface owner does not concur with geothermal development. However, low-temperature, direct-use geothermal applications such as space heating and domestic hot water heating can be compatible with surface uses.

About 10,000 acres of land in the San Diego Mountain, Doña Ana, Robledo Mountain, and Organ/Franklin Mountain ACECs that have geothermal potential would be closed to leasing. This could result in significant impacts. These areas have moderate to high potential for the development of low-temperature, direct-use geothermal applications. The Las Cruces vicinity offers a Nationally significant geothermal resource that has prime potential for this type of development. If these areas are not available for leasing, there could be less incentive for aquaculture and greenhouse industries to locate here. Table 4-3 lists the acreage of public land that would be available for geothermal development compared to the potential for geothermal resources.

Nonenergy Leasable Minerals

About 3,300 acres of land having moderate sodium potential in the Lordsburg Playa RNA would be unavailable for leasing and development. This would not be expected to result in any significant impacts. Unlike base and precious metals, there are vast quantities of sodium resources elsewhere in the United States.

Table 4-4 lists the acreage of public land that would be available for non-energy leasable mineral development compared to the potential for these resources.

Locatable Minerals

Most of the land identified for disposal has low potential for the occurrence of locatable minerals. There are 1,000 acres of high potential land in the Silver City area and 2,600 acres west of the southern San Andres Mountains that are identified for disposal. However, legal access to the areas near Silver City is limited, so the loss of the public's opportunities for mining would not be significant. The loss of the area near the San Andres Mountains would be more significant because the public currently has good legal access. If the mineral estate is reserved to the United

TABLE 4-2
AVAILABILITY OF LAND FOR OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT RELATIVE TO POTENTIAL (ACRES OF FEDERAL MINERAL ESTATE)*
PROPOSED PLAN

	POTENTIAL FOR OCCURRENCE			
	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	TOTAL
Open/Standard Lease Terms and Conditions	1,936,600	1,595,700	0	3,532,300
Open/Stipulations	152,000	122,000	0	274,000
Open/No Surface Occupancy	55,600	9,400	0	65,000
Not Open to Leasing	181,300	85,700	0	267,000
Nondiscretionary Closure (withdrawals)	168,500	408,900	0	577,400
Total	2,494,000	2,221,700	0	4,715,700

Source: BLM Files, 1990.

Note: *Does not include U.S. Forest Service.

TABLE 4-3
AVAILABILITY OF LAND FOR GEOTHERMAL DEVELOPMENT RELATIVE TO POTENTIAL (ACRES OF FEDERAL MINERAL ESTATE)*
PROPOSED PLAN

	POTENTIAL FOR OCCURRENCE			
	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	TOTAL
Open/Standard Lease Terms and Conditions	3,236,600	206,200	56,700	3,499,500
Open/Stipulations	239,000	35,000	0	274,000
Open/No Surface Occupancy	64,200	800	0	65,000
Not Open to Leasing	255,600	11,400	0	267,000
Nondiscretionary Closure (withdrawals)	574,700	0	2,700	577,400
Total	4,370,100	253,400	59,400	4,682,900

Source: BLM Files, 1990.

Note: *Does not include U.S. Forest Service.

TABLE 4-4
AVAILABILITY OF LAND FOR NONENERGY LEASABLE MINERAL DEVELOPMENT RELATIVE TO POTENTIAL
(ACRES OF FEDERAL MINERAL ESTATE)*
PROPOSED PLAN

	POTENTIAL FOR OCCURRENCE			
	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	TOTAL
Open/Standard Lease Terms and Conditions	3,487,500	12,000	0	3,499,500
Open/Stipulations	274,000	0	0	274,000
Open/No Surface Occupancy	64,500	500	0	65,000
Not Open to Leasing	263,600	3,400	0	267,000
Nondiscretionary Closure (withdrawals)	577,400	0	0	577,400
Total	4,667,000	15,900	0	4,682,900

Source: BLM Files, 1990.

Note: *Does not include U.S. Forest Service.

States, there could be conflicts between the surfaceowner and the mining claimants concerning surface damages.

Land identified for the acquisition of vehicular access and land adjacent to these areas have low **POTENTIAL FOR LOCATABLE MINERALS. CONSEQUENTLY, THE NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINERAL EXPLORATION ON THIS LAND WOULD BE INSIGNIFICANT.**

About 3,800 acres of high potential land in the Organ/Franklin Mountain ACEC and 1,500 acres of moderate potential land in the Apache Box ACEC would be unavailable for exploration and development. Respectively, this represents about 7 percent of the total high-potential lands and less than 1 percent of the moderate-potential lands. This would not result in any immediate or short-term impacts. However, there could be long-term, adverse, cumulative impacts if areas like these are removed from public ownership. It is then possible that exploration, development, and production may not occur thus depriving the United States of potential sources of base and precious metals.

Table 4-5 lists the acreage of public land that would be available for locatable mineral development in comparison to locatable mineral potential.

Salable Minerals

About 18,000 acres of land proposed for disposal are located on the Las Cruces East Mesa and have high potential for the development of sand and gravel. This represents about 38 percent of the total high potential sand and gravel between Las Cruces and Anthony. Disposal of these lands would preclude the extraction of these mineral resources. Retaining the minerals in Federal ownership would not resolve this problem. Potential conflicts that would arise from the split ownership of the surface estate and the mineral estate in any area of city expansion would most likely prevent the extraction of salable minerals.

About 4,000 acres (or 8 percent of the high potential sand and gravel between Las Cruces and Anthony) having high potential for sand and gravel resources would be closed to material sales in the Organ/Franklin Mountains ACEC. These areas along the east side of the Rio Grande Valley southeast of Las Cruces, could provide sources of sand and gravel as Doña Ana County continues to grow.

If these lands are unavailable for development of the sand and gravel resources, there could be significant impacts on the local economy. Sand and gravel are essential in the construction industries associated with the continued growth of an area.

Table 4-6 lists the acreage of public land that would be available for salable mineral development in comparison to salable mineral potential.

IN SUMMARY, land identified for disposal has low potential for the occurrence and development of oil and gas, so the loss of this mineral resource from public ownership would be insignificant.

The Lordsburg Playa **RNA** would be closed to leasing and therefore unavailable for potential exploration and development of sodium resources.

The Organ/Franklin Mountains ACEC has high potential for the occurrence of locatable minerals. Closing this area to mining would preclude exploration and development.

Land identified for disposal near Las Cruces has moderate to high potential for geothermal resources. The loss of this mineral resource from public ownership would preclude the opportunity for leasing and development. If the geothermal estate is retained in Federal ownership, development of the geothermal resources could lead to conflicts between the surface owner and geothermal lessee. However, geothermal development can be compatible with surface uses.

Disposal of land near Las Cruces that has high potential for the development of sand and gravel would preclude the development of this mineral resource. Retaining the salable minerals in Federal ownership would lead to potential split estate conflicts because mining of mineral materials is not compatible with surface use.

LANDS

The **156,460** acres of public land identified for disposal under **THE PROPOSED PLAN** consists of isolated parcels and small tracts located in Luna, Hidalgo and Grant counties, and lands located in Doña Ana County as identified for disposal in the Southern Rio Grande Plan Amendment and new parcels identified for disposal near La Union, New Mexico. **THE PROPOSED PLAN** would allow BLM to dispose of difficult to manage public land in Grant, Hidalgo, and Luna counties that could provide numerous opportunities for the public and provide high valued land in Doña Ana County, mostly near the City of Las Cruces, for the potential growth of the community.

Approximately 93,110 acres of State trust land and 56,214 acres of private land would be acquired **FROM A WILLING SELLER.** These acquisition areas would be inholdings within existing and proposed ACECs **AND OTHER SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS**. Consolidation of the public land would significantly improve management efficiency, effectiveness, and costs.

RETAINING management of approximately 2,895,360 acres of public land would allow BLM to carry out multiple-use management on these lands.

Legal vehicular access to certain public land would enable some applicants to locate site rights-of-way easier and coordinate with only one landowner. Administrative or legal access across private land to public land creates better management conditions for BLM.

Approximately 264,870 acres of exclusion area would be created which would prohibit the issuance of new right-of-way grants, except where existing right-of-way corridors occur. Approximately 783,400 acres would be identified as avoidance areas which would restrict construction and maintenance activities as well as the size and type of actions to be authorized. These designations could make right-of-way construction more difficult and expensive for utility companies. Utility routes may deviate more and therefore require longer rights-of-way, thus increasing the amount of surface disturbance. However, areas open for right-of-way development would be easier to identify.

IN SUMMARY, land ownership adjustments would occur on approximately 5 percent of the public land within the Resource Area. Approximately 149,324 acres of State trust and private inholdings within ACECs **AND SMAs** would be acquired to improve manageability. Approximately 1,895,360 acres of public land would be managed for

TABLE 4-5
AVAILABILITY OF LAND FOR LOCATABLE MINERAL DEVELOPMENT RELATIVE TO POTENTIAL
(ACRES OF FEDERAL MINERAL ESTATE)*
THE PROPOSED PLAN

	POTENTIAL FOR OCCURRENCE			
	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	TOTAL
Open	3,662,900	278,500	44,800	3,986,200
Closed	55,300	4,900	3,800	64,000
Nondiscretionary Closure (withdrawals)	599,000	30,200	3,500	632,700
Total	4,317,200	313,600	52,100	4,682,900

Source: BLM Files, 1990.

Note: *Does not include U.S. Forest Service.

TABLE 4-6
AVAILABILITY OF LAND FOR SALABLE MINERAL DEVELOPMENT RELATIVE TO POTENTIAL
(ACRES OF FEDERAL MINERAL ESTATE)*
PROPOSED PLAN

	POTENTIAL FOR OCCURRENCE			
	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	TOTAL
Open	3,271,500	184,600	55,600	3,511,700
Closed	308,100	19,200	4,700	332,000
Nondiscretionary Closure (withdrawals)	836,600	0	2,600	839,200
Total	4,416,200	203,800	62,900	4,682,900

Source: BLM Files, 1990.

Note: *Does not include U.S. Forest Service.

multiple-use under BLM administration and open to all applicable public land laws which would provide opportunities for public use. Right-of-way placement would be excluded from 264,870 acres of public land, except in existing right-of-way corridors, and would be restricted on an additional 783,400 acres. Right-of-way exclusion and avoidance areas could present longer routes and more expense for right-of-way applicants. However, areas open for right-of-way development would be easier to identify.

ACCESS

UNDER THE PROPOSED PLAN, ACCESS COULD BE LOST TO 156,460 ACRES OF PUBLIC LAND IN DOÑA ANA, LUNA, GRANT, AND HIDALGO COUNTIES THROUGH DISPOSAL. Some of these lands are in small, isolated parcels that have no existing legal access. Other lands identified for disposal are adjacent to the City of Las Cruces on both the East and West Mesas, and some are adjacent to the Organ and Franklin Mountains. Disposal of land in these areas without specific easement reservation could restrict access to the proposed Organ Mountains National Conservation Area. Reservation of easements would be necessary to maintain existing access across any disposed lands that provide or could provide access routes to other public land or to Forest Service, State trust, or private lands.

Acquisition of State trust and private lands would allow BLM to improve access to and across public land in **21** ACECs and other SMAs including areas for wilderness study, the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, and wild and scenic river inventory units. Accessibility of public land would be improved by improving land ownership patterns in the public land, and reducing land ownership boundaries in those areas that receive the highest levels of public use including most of the mountain ranges from the Organ Mountains to the Arizona border and the Gila Lower Box.

Vehicle closures would curtail vehicular access on 89,180 acres of land along the **INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY**. An additional 37,180 acres in SMAs would be designated as closed to all vehicle use, necessitating any uses of these areas that require vehicular access to either stop or be relocated outside of the closed areas. Foot access would not be impeded in these closed areas, so any uses in these areas that do not require vehicle use would be unaffected. Another 539,640 acres would be designated as limited to designated roads and trails, restricting vehicular access within these areas to existing roads except those roads that may be causing degradation of the resources for which those SMAs are designated, which could be closed or rerouted. Access within two new open areas totalling 16,190 acres would be unrestricted, enhancing vehicular access to lands within and adjacent to the Aden Hills and the Lordsburg South Playa. Access on the remaining 2,371,630 acres within the Resource Area would be limited to existing roads and trails, maintaining the current level and routes of access to and across 78 percent of the public land in the Resource Area.

Proposal of four new areas for wilderness study would not significantly hinder access to and across public land.

Development of new foot and vehicle access routes would be **PURSUED** road construction across public land and easement acquisition across State trust and private lands. Legal vehicular and foot access would be significantly improved to the Alamo Hueco, Big Hatchet, Burro, Cedar, Cooke's, Florida, Goodsight, Little Hatchet, Organ, Peloncillo, Pyramid, Robledo, Tres Hermanas, Sierra Rica, and West Potrillo Mountains plus Apache Box, the Apache Hills, Bear Creek, the Coyote Hills, Blue Creek, Community Pit #1, the Gila Lower and Middle Boxes, the Sleeping Lady and Rough and Ready Hills, and the San Simon Cienega. Access route development and acquisition would improve the existing network of public land access routes to provide the public with **BETTER** opportunities to enjoy the full spectrum of public land uses.

Vehicular access would benefit from designation of areas as open to rights-of-way, fluid mineral leasing, locatable mineral entry, and salable mineral development although fewer opportunities for development of access as a result of these activities would be available under **THE PROPOSED PLAN THAN EXIST NOW.** Roads developed for mineral activities could provide new access routes for other users of the public land. Right-of-way exclusion areas would not benefit access with new road construction.

IN SUMMARY, disposal of isolated parcels of public land would not significantly deter access to and across public land, while disposal of larger blocks of public land may detract from existing access opportunities if easements aren't reserved on disposed lands, particularly around the Organ and Franklin Mountains. Acquisition of non-Federal inholdings would enhance legal vehicular and foot access to and across ACECs and other SMAs throughout the Resource Area. Vehicle closures and limitations would limit vehicular access to designated roads and trails within 21 ACECs **AND OTHER SMAs**, and some access routes within these areas would likely be closed to protect sensitive resources. Vehicle closure would end vehicular access south of the Anapra Road and State Road near the Mexican border in Doña Ana and Luna Counties. Vehicle limitations would limit vehicular access to existing roads and trails over most of the Resource Area, but development of access routes including easement acquisition and road construction would enhance opportunities to access most blocked public land areas.

LIVESTOCK GRAZING

The disposal of land through sale or exchange could have a long-term impact on grazing if these lands were eventually developed and fenced out of an allotment. Most affected allotments (Section 15 leases) only contain small isolated parcels of public land. If disposed of, many of **THE PRESENT GRAZING** allotments would no longer contain any public land **SO THEY WOULD NO LONGER BE BLM GRAZING ALLOTMENTS. UNDER THE PROPOSED PLAN, THERE COULD BE 113 ALLOTMENTS AFFECTED (SEE TABLE 4-7). IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT MOST LAND OWNERSHIP ADJUSTMENTS WOULD BE MADE THROUGH EXCHANGE. THEREFORE, AS LANDS ARE DISPOSED IN ALLOTMENTS CONTAINING SCATTERED, ISOLATED PARCELS, LANDS WILL BE ACQUIRED IN OTHER AREAS. THESE AREAS WILL BE ADDED TO ALLOTMENTS IN THOSE AREAS RESULTING IN A NET LOSS OF 435 AUs.** The owner of any permanent range improvements would be compensated for the adjusted value of their interest in these range improvements. Setting priority disposal areas on the East Mesa will make grazing management **MORE** reasonable and possible **AS LANDS WILL BE DISPOSED OF ON AREAS ON THE EDGES OF THE ALLOTMENTS FIRST.** If these lands were sold or exchanged to the permittee, grazing would remain the same, but if the land was sold to another interest, grazing use could be lost or grazing patterns substantially changed. There is always an opportunity for a lease agreement between the grazing permittee and **NEW** landowner granting control of the property **TO THE PERMITTEE** and livestock. Grazing AUs could be reduced if no agreement was reached and the percent Federal **LAND** would change accordingly. The multiple-use management of 2,895,360 acres of public land would allow continued livestock grazing on the public land. The acquisition of State trust and private lands would block up the public land. Developing and managing grazing activity plans would be easier.

Designation of ACECs could have an impact on livestock grazing in those areas if grazing patterns were altered or livestock excluded. Most of these areas have significant biological or other resource values. Parts of the ACECs could be fenced to protect these values from grazing use. Livestock grazing would be eliminated or excluded on 8,026 acres within these ACECs. Grazing patterns would change. AUs for the most part would remain the same **AS THE AREAS WHERE LIVESTOCK WOULD BE EXCLUDED ARE SMALL.** These areas are the Central Peloncillo Mountains, Bear Creek, Redrock Game Farm, and part of the Organ Mountains. **ACECs ARE USUALLY PART OF A LARGER ALLOTMENT SO GRAZING** activity plans would be developed to minimize conflicts between recreational activities and livestock use **ON THE REST OF THE ALLOTMENT**. These plans would benefit grazing in the long-term by improving distribution patterns and allowing rest for forage species.

Vehicle use would be limited to designated roads and trails which could have a negative impact on grazing practices. Human and livestock interactions would be limited.

The designation of four new areas for wilderness study would carry all the standard stipulations. These four new study areas are included in 14 allotments. Range improvement maintenance and development would be more costly, difficult and time consuming. The monitoring of livestock movements, salting and supplementing could also be more difficult.

Intensive vehicle use would be expanded to 16,190 acres in two new areas. The allotments which contain these new areas could have more problems with vandalism and livestock harassment. The allotments are Walters (No. 01068); Lunt (No. 01034); Aden Hills (No. 03001); and Corralitos (No. 03013). Having specific areas for intensive vehicle use, should limit the problems in the rest

TABLE 4-7
ALLOTMENTS POTENTIALLY IMPACTED BY LAND DISPOSAL ACTION
PROPOSED PLAN

Allotment Number	Allotment Name	Total Preference
01077	Brockman Homestead	348
01518	McCants Lease	36
01550	Hughes Lease	120
01553	Stuart Trust	36
02001	Edwin and Joyce Allen	156
02031	Akela North	420
02051	Steeple A	2,628
02501	Edwin and Joyce Allen	108
02502	Benedict Lease	144
02503	Red Mountain Ranch	240
02504	Cerro Mesa Ranch	1,056
02505	Black Mountain Ranch	420
02506	Hatcher East Lease	12
02508	Hurt Lease	708
02509	Hatcher John Lease	60
02511	Hervol Lease	12
02512	Irwin Lease	24
02513	Sweetwater Past	84
02514	Jones Lease	24
02515	Kretek Corp. Lease	24
02516	Jesse Mauer	96
02517	McCauley J. L. Lease	288
02518	Nunn Joe Bill Lease	144
02519	Simpson Lease	528
02520	Seventy Six Draw	528
02521	Richardson Lease	12
02522	Salopek Lease	48
02523	Smyer Frank Lease	60
02524	Speir Lease	612
02525	Cerro Mesa Ranch	120
02526	Chino Lease	336
02527	Black Mountain West	300
02528	Butterfield	180
02529	POL Lease	12
02530	Butterfield Trail	324
02532	Cienega Ranch	432
02533	T Bar Ranch	24
02534	Foster Lease	12
02535	Burdick Hills West	24
02536	Koenig Lease	36
02537	Phillips Lease	136
02539	May Lease	252
02540	Flat Ranch Lease	36
02541	Acosta Lease	24
02542	Southwest Lease	132
03008	Picacho Peak	985
03027	Bignell Arroyo	444
03031	Las Uvas Ranch	3,089
03044	Western Oil Company	408
03058	Palma Park	1,584
03061	Garfield	444
04501	Keith Lease	204
04502	McCauley F. L. Lease	984
04503	Pine Canyon Lease	1,140
04504	Onda Lease	504
04505	Hatcher West Lease	48
04506	Hollimon Lease	1,332
04507	Brown Lease	12
04508	Faywood Lease	12
04509	96 Creek Lease	48
04510	Crumbley Lease	12

TABLE 4-7 (Concluded)
ALLOTMENTS POTENTIALLY IMPACTED BY LAND DISPOSAL ACTION
PROPOSED PLAN

Allotment Number	Allotment Name	Total Preference
04511	De La O Lease	60
04512	Delancey Lease	60
04513	Upton Mountain Lease	348
04514	Delk Lease	888
04515	Upton Lease	60
04516	Dickerson Lease	1,020
04517	2C Ranch Lease	1,068
04518	McDonald Lease	168
04519	Whiskey Creek	120
04520	Foster Lease	60
04521	Foy Partnership Lease	132
04522	Franks Ranch Lease	1,500
04523	White Rock Canyon	708
04524	Glenn Lease	48
04525	Genevieve Gunter	1,620
04526	Harrington Ranch	120
04527	Hinton Lease	180
04528	Hooker Joe Lease	780
04529	Pitchfork Ranch	1,104
04530	Casas Grandes Lease	499
04531	Hayes Lease	24
04532	McCauley Harry Lease	48
04533	McCauley Marie Lease	720
04534	McCauley J. A. Lease	36
04535	Ogilvie Ranch Lease	120
04536	Niblett Lease	72
04537	Greenwood Ranch	1,008
04538	Three Sisters Lease	12
04539	Rice and Son Lease	156
04540	Richardson Lease	12
04541	Spires Cattle Lease	648
04542	Strain Lease	12
04543	Pugmire Lease	132
04544	Boston Hill Lease	12
04545	Brockman Lease	24
04546	Wesley Brown Lease	156
04547	Eby Ranch Lease	1,224
04548	Norris Lease	528
04549	Moore Nadine Lease	960
04550	Hooker Lease	12
04551	Johnson Clint Lease	12
04552	Moon Ranch	24
04553	Gunter Lease	12
04554	Capulin Cattle Lease	432
04555	Jarrell Ranch Lease	1,136
04556	Reich Ranch Lease	24
04557	Fierro Lease	24
04559	Tioga-Marion	12
04598	7XV Ranch Lease	60
15002	Dripping Springs	1,759
15004	Anthony Gap	492
15007	Jeff Isaacks	1,905
15008	R. L. Isaacks	396
15009	Bishop's Cap	1,593
15010	Tex-Line	180
15012	Organ	168
TOTAL NO. OF ALLOTMENTS 113	TOTAL PREFERENCE	46,982

Source: BLM Files, 1990.

of the Resource Area. Limiting vehicle use to designated or existing roads and trails, limits livestock and human interaction. Because most roads or trails lead to developed improvements, vandalism except during the hunting season remains about the same. The closed vehicle use designation could create problems in range improvement maintenance, development, **AND BLM LIVESTOCK GRAZING MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS.** Monitoring of livestock movement and other activities associated with livestock maintenance especially along the **MEXICAN/AMERICAN** border would be more **DIFFICULT AND LESS EFFICIENT BY THIS PROPOSED CLOSURE.**

New access routes would alter livestock patterns as they are developed. Depending on where the new access were developed additional fencing may be needed which would alter livestock patterns. These routes could allow livestock to move into areas not previously available. New access could increase the human livestock interaction factor which could lead to increased vandalism and animal harassment.

Designation of right-of-way exclusion areas would prevent the disruption of grazing patterns associated with right-of-way development. Designation of right-of-way avoidance areas would keep livestock disruption to a minimum. Where rights-of-way were granted, there could be a initial disruption in livestock grazing patterns during the construction phase. Patterns would return to normal upon completion of the line or site.

ELIMINATION OF MINING ACTIVITIES BY WITHDRAWING THE LANDS FROM MINERAL ENTRY would eliminate even the short-term impacts to livestock grazing. The rest of the Resource Area would be subject to the standard stipulations. Some disruption in grazing patterns could occur over the short-term. Mineral material sales would continue to cause problems in the allotments they were located in. Grazing use would decrease as the vegetation was removed. Long-term impacts to livestock grazing would be minimal as the animals adapt to the new activity.

Two additional SRMAs **(DONA ANA MOUNTAINS AND FORT CUMMINGS)** would be designated in the Resource Area. These would require recreation or grazing activity plans to mitigate the potential conflict between livestock and recreational users on two allotments. The possibility of livestock and visitor interaction would increase especially in areas more heavily used by livestock as camping and grazing use do not readily coexist.

The development of six new HMPs would benefit livestock and wildlife by identifying conflicts and proposing appropriate measures to remedy these problem areas. All of the new plans would involve species which can coexist with livestock. Additional range improvements may be needed to implement rotational grazing plans. Grazing patterns may need to be changed to provide forage during key periods for both livestock and wildlife. Livestock AUs could be reduced if **THE** additional forage needed to meet wildlife population goals could not be derived from chemical treatments or prescribed burns.

Watershed activity plans on eight critical watershed areas, upon implementation, would improve ground cover and lessen soil loss. Forage would improve for a variety of uses including livestock. Distribution of livestock would improve which would improve use patterns. Grazing patterns could be altered and in small areas grazing eliminated as part of these plans.

Vegetation sales of native plants and the new sale area between Deming and Lordsburg would have a small impact on grazing use, most of this associated with increased human activity and some off-road vehicle use. The removal of some yucca plants would have a minimal impact as livestock prefer the **PODS** in the spring.

The desired plant community under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, would involve a significant amount of brush treatment by chemical herbicides. (For additional information on chemical brush control see the SRG EIS, Las Cruces/Lordsburg MFPA/EIS **AND THE FINAL EIS VEGETATION TREATMENT ON BLM LANDS IN THE THIRTEEN WESTERN STATES, 1991.)** Most of the brush dominated areas would not show a change unless treated with a chemical designed to kill that specific shrub species (such as Spike 20P). Most brush treated areas would change to a grass/forb dominated area in the short-term with shrubs moving back in over time. With proper grazing management, the effects of a brush control, such as increased plant diversity and production, improved ground cover and soil stabilization could last for the long-term. All chemical treated areas are rested from livestock grazing for at least the second and third growing season after treatment. **TOBOSA AND SACATON** burn areas are normally rested until regrowth has attained a height of 4 inches on the forage species. **OTHER AREAS THAT ARE BURNED WILL BE RESTED FOR TWO GROWING SEASONS.**

Livestock grazing would be eliminated on 8,026 acres of public land. **THREE OF THE FOUR AREAS ARE PRESENTLY EXCLUDED** from grazing because of significant riparian, recreational or wildlife values. These areas are the Red Rock Game Farm and **PORTIONS OF THE** Central Peloncillo Mountains for bighorn sheep, Bear Creek for riparian values and part of the Organ Mountains for recreational use. **THIS WOULD CAUSE A PERMANENT LOSS OF 90 AUs.**

Riparian and arroyo habitat would continue to attract livestock. The damage from trampling and grazing would be mitigated through a rotational grazing activity plan which takes into account the need of the vegetation, wildlife and livestock. In areas where livestock use is excluded by fencing, additional improvements would be needed to disperse livestock use. Grazing patterns would change. Most of these areas are small so the impacts to livestock would be minimal.

Management for special status species plants is incorporated into the ACEC prescriptions. Livestock grazing may be changed or eliminated in certain areas to ensure a species continued existence.

IN SUMMARY, multiple-use management and acquisition of land, vehicle use limited to existing or designated roads and trails, watershed management plans and desired plant community **OBJECTIVES THROUGH CHEMICAL TREATMENT** would have short- and long term beneficial impacts on livestock grazing by limiting the interaction between humans and livestock and improving forage conditions. **CONTINUED ELIMINATION OF LIVESTOCK GRAZING WOULD RESULT IN A PERMANENT LOSS OF 90 AUs. LAND OWNERSHIP ADJUSTMENTS WOULD LIKELY NOT AFFECT ON-GOING GRAZING OPERATIONS BUT WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF REVENUE TO THE GOVERNMENT FROM GRAZING FEES ON 435 AUs.**

VEGETATION

The disposal of **156,460** acres of public land could impact the vegetation resources in those areas. Lands under BLM jurisdiction are managed and protected under the multiple-use mandate. Disposal lands are usually identified for city expansion. Subsequent development usually requires leveling, clearing and other surface disturbing activities. Most of the identified land **(APPROXIMATELY 70,000 ACRES)** is on the East Mesa. Many parcels of land are one section or less in size and are scattered through out the Resource Area but mainly in Grant and Luna Counties. Acquired lands from the State and private sector would come under the multiple-use and protection mandate. Many of the acquired lands would possess rare or unusual plant communities. The retained lands would remain the same.

The designation of ACECs **AND SMAs** would provide an extra measure of management and protection to the native vegetation. Many of the ACECs have been identified for biological reasons. All vehicular traffic would be limited to designated roads and trails in these ACECs unless the area is closed to vehicle use. Parking or camping areas have been proposed in some of the ACECs. The removal of vegetation under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, would be approximately 23 acres. Livestock grazing, if permitted, would require a grazing activity plan **TO BE DEVELOPED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE LIVESTOCK OPERATOR**. Mineral entry opportunities would be severely limited; minimizing the loss of the vegetation resource. Interim Management Policy restrictions in four new areas for wilderness study would provide additional protection to the vegetation resources. Vehicle use would be limited to existing roads and trails or closed to vehicle use in designated wilderness areas. The maintenance of vegetation in its natural state is an objective of wilderness management.

There would be 16,190 acres of open off-road vehicle use. While vegetation in these areas could be lost or damaged, the surrounding areas should sustain less abuse from vehicle use. Limiting vehicle use to designated or existing roads and trails would protect the vegetation resource. Closed areas would prevent vegetation resource damage from vehicle use.

Development of new access would cause vegetation loss along the length of the new route. **AN AVERAGE OF 1 ACRE OF VEGETATION DISTURBANCE PER MILE OF NEW ACCESS WOULD OCCUR.** If the road was not bladed, vegetation would remain between the tire tracks. Vegetation loss would be minimal.

The designation of right-of-way exclusion areas and right-of-way avoidance areas would prevent or greatly limit vegetation disturbance in these areas. Impacts to vegetation species would be short-term. Reseeding and recontouring stipulations would mitigate long-term impacts.

Disturbance to vegetation would be prevented in areas closed to mineral activities. In areas open to mineral entry, there would be some initial vegetation loss from exploration and development. These disturbances would be localized (<123 acres per year). All disturbed areas would be recontoured and reseeded. Native plants **THAT ARE DISPLACED BY MINING ACTIVITIES** are made available to the public whenever possible **THROUGH THE ADOPT-A-PLANT PROGRAM.** Successful reclamation is dependent upon climatic conditions.

The designation of two new SRMAs and the accompanying plans which would be developed on these new areas could cause some vegetation loss as recreation sites **ARE** developed in the short-term. Long-term benefits to the native vegetation resource could be realized through educational awareness. With visitor use concentrated in "high" impact areas, surrounding vegetation types would receive less human impact.

Six new HMPs would establish vegetation management objectives for wildlife and other uses and outline ways to achieve these objectives. These plans should balance use levels on key species used by wildlife and livestock. Key vegetation species should improve and increase. Project development could cause a loss of several acres of vegetation in the short-term.

Watershed activity plans for eight critical watershed areas would impact the vegetation resource by providing for the stabilization of the soils and reestablishment of native vegetation species. Project development, in the short-term, could cause a loss of several acres of native vegetation.

Vegetation sales of native plants in the existing areas and the establishment of a new sale area between Lordsburg and Deming would cause minimal damage to the vegetative resource. Yucca, ocotillo and desert willow are the species identified for the new area. Some off-road vehicle use is required.

The desired plant community concept, under **THE PROPOSED PLAN,** would **REQUIRE CHEMICAL TREATMENT OF** brush dominated areas with herbicides. (For additional information see the SRG EIS, Las Cruces/Lordsburg MFPA/EIS **AND FINAL EIS VEGETATION TREATMENT ON BLM LAND IN THIRTEEN WESTERN STATES, 1991**). Most of the brush dominated areas would not show a change unless treated with a prescribed herbicide such as Spike 20P. **IT IS EXPECTED THAT BRUSH COULD BE TREATED ON APPROXIMATELY ½ MILLION ACRES AND** would change to a grass and forb dominated area in the short-term with shrubs moving back in over time. Prescribed grazing management could prolong the effects of a brush control, such as increased plant diversity and production, improved ground cover and soil stabilization. Snakeweed, which responds more to climatic changes than chemical treatment would be burned and not chemically treated under **THE PROPOSED PLAN.** Prescribed and natural fire would be used to treat other areas. The areas which are expected to respond to a fire are mixed desert shrub greater than 10 percent slope, mountain brush areas, snakeweed types and grass bottomlands. Brush invasion in the grass bottomland would be retarded with prescribed fires. Areas presently dominated by brush species do not allow for much species diversity and in many cases contribute to soil loss.

PROPOSED PLAN

Eliminating livestock grazing on 8,026 acres would protect forage species from livestock overuse and may permit improvement of vegetation conditions in some areas. The benefits which can be associated with proper grazing management such as old growth removal and plant stimulation would not be realized.

Riparian and arroyo habitats under **THE PROPOSED PLAN** would require a grazing activity plan for each area. Most surface disturbing activities would occur outside these zones. All of the areas would be closed to vehicle use or limited to designated roads and trails. Visitor use would be directed away from most riparian areas. All of these measures would help in the short- and long-term reestablishment of riparian vegetation.

IN SUMMARY, beneficial impacts to vegetation resources due to the BLM's mandate to manage public land or because areas have been withdrawn or have limited uses assigned to them would occur from multiple-use management and acquisition of lands, ACECs, vehicle use limited to designated or existing roads and trails, watershed management plans, desired plant community objectives, 40 percent use on black grama, and the elimination of livestock grazing. As a result of meeting desired plant community objectives and land treatments, vegetation diversity and ground cover would be improved on approximately ½ **MILLION ACRES**. The disposal of public land, would have short- and long-term negative impacts from potential vegetation loss.

SOIL/AIR/WATER

Soil

Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, lands identified for disposal would be the responsibility of State and local governments. More acres could be subject to soil disturbance. Lands near urban centers could be subjected to clearing, levelling, and construction activities. Any soil loss from accelerated erosion would be irretrievable. Lands away from urban centers could be subjected to unregulated surface activities such as grazing, mining, and recreation use. Most of the lands subject to these activities would be on the East and West Mesas near Las Cruces. Improved manageability through acquisition and blocking up of lands would protect the soil resource because activities on these lands would be regulated and limited in their scope and extent.

MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS FOR 21 ACECs AND 4 RNAs would close these areas to mineral material sales, fluid mineral leasing, and in some cases close locatable mineral entry, limit or exclude off-road vehicle use, exclude authorizations for rights-of-way, and develop or revise Area Management Plans. These prescriptions would prevent soil surface disturbance and vegetation loss. Approximately 28 acres would be subject to soil disturbance from fence construction, parking area and primitive campground development.

Off-road vehicle closures would provide greater protection to the soil resource from soil disturbance and vegetation loss. Limiting off-road vehicle use to existing or designated roads and trails over most of the Resource Area, would provide greater protection to the soil resource because soil surface disturbance and vegetation loss would not extend beyond existing or designated roads and trails. Areas open to off-road vehicle use, would result in a greater area subjected to soil surface disturbance, compaction and vegetation loss.

Developing new access into 19 areas could involve surface disturbing activities such as road construction. New road construction could increase the soil susceptibility to wind and water erosion at least during construction activities.

Designation of right-of-way avoidance areas would impact the soil resource because if rights-of-way must be located in these areas they would be subject to special stipulations to minimize affects from construction activities. Designation of right-of-way exclusion areas would impact the soil resource because activities associated with the right-of-way would not occur in these areas. Designation of areas open to rights-of-way (subject to standard stipulations) would be affected by surface soil disturbance activities such as construction, maintenance and continued use of the right-of-way by vehicles.

Exploration and development of fluid minerals on lands which are open to leasing (subject to standard stipulations) would affect the soil resource by disturbing surface soil near exploration sites by activities such as construction of access, drilling, site clearing and in the case of development, installation of utilities, structures and additional access if needed. The soil resource on areas closed to fluid mineral leasing would not be impacted by activities associated with fluid mineral exploration and development.

Activities on areas open to locatable mineral entry would result in site-specific soil disturbance from drilling, trenching, mining, construction of access roads, clearing of sites, and deposition of tailings from mines. Areas closed to locatable mineral entry would not be subjected to soil disturbance from locatable mineral activities.

Areas open to salable mineral disposal (subject to standard stipulations) would result in the removal of the soil surface, construction of access roads, clearing and levelling of sites for equipment and salable material storage. Areas closed to salable mineral disposal would not be subjected to soil disturbance from salable material disposal activities.

The two existing SRMAs, the Organ Mountains and Gila Lower Box, would continue. Two additional SRMAs (Doña Ana Mountains and Fort Cummings) would be designated, and the remainder of the Resource Area would be managed primarily for dispersed recreation opportunities. In the Organ Mountains SRMA, activities which may impact the soil resource (hiking and camping) by causing erosion and soil compaction, are limited to designated and maintained trails and campgrounds at Aguirre Spring Recreation Area and designated and maintained trails at Dripping Springs Natural Area and established but unmaintained trails throughout the remainder of the SRMA. The Gila Lower Box SRMA and the two additional SRMAs are subject to unrestricted hiking and camping. Soil erosion and compaction may occur where unmaintained trails and campsites are found. Since most of these activities are widely dispersed, impacts are most likely to occur where use is concentrated (such as hunting camps). However, these activities tend to be of short duration.

Implementation of the existing six habitat management plans and development of six additional habitat management plans would provide protection to the soil resource in these areas because activities which may occur in these areas are generally limited in scope and extent by existing management guidelines. Impacts to the soil surface from habitat development projects would be limited and would not be permanent.

Developing watershed plans on eight areas would improve, protect, and enhance the soil resource by improving vegetation ground cover, reducing erosion, and reducing runoff while increasing percolation of water into the ground. These results would be realized by improving grazing practices, restricting off-road vehicle USE, mining, and recreation activities on these areas.

Soil surface disturbances in the five existing vegetation sale areas in Doña Ana County and the addition of a vegetation sale area near Deming would be limited to specific sites where digging of individual plants occurs and where off-road vehicles are used within these sale areas.

Vegetation treatments would include such methods as prescribed fire and chemical brush control in conjunction with proper grazing methods. Prescribed fires could cause short-term soil erosion because vegetation cover would be temporarily removed (regrowth would occur in 1 to 2 years). Hot spots in fires can alter physical soil surface properties by reducing organic matter, decreasing nitrogen content and reducing soil microbes (Wright and Bailey 1982). These alterations are not permanent and recovery occurs with revegetation of the area. Increased vegetation ground cover would result in long-term improved watershed conditions. Improved grazing management would benefit the soil resource through increased herbaceous ground cover, and reduced impacts from cattle trails and sacrifice areas near water.

The exclusion of grazing would eliminate impacts associated with grazing such as trailing and trampling. Erosion may be reduced through increased ground cover, erosion and compaction from cattle trails to and from water would be eliminated, and sacrifice areas near water sources would not exist after a period of recovery.

PROPOSED PLAN

Secured instream flows would benefit the soil resource because water levels within stream channels would be maintained allowing streamside vegetation to increase resulting in stable stream banks and dense ground cover to trap silt carried by flood waters.

IN SUMMARY, under this alternative, impacts to the soil resource would be limited to site-specific activities. Acres withdrawn from some mineral, grazing, and off-road vehicle activities would be increased and a significant number of acres would be managed for recreation, wildlife, and watershed values which would improve watershed conditions and decrease erosion.

Air

Lands identified for disposal could be subjected to activities which could affect air quality, such as clearing, construction, and sand and gravel operations which could increase dust levels in and near the areas of activity during construction phases. These lands are primarily on the East and West Mesas near Las Cruces and acreages are significantly greater than **EXISTS NOW.** Lands identified for disposal would not be managed by the BLM. Restrictions on activities would be the responsibility of State and local governments. Acquisition and consolidation of lands would maintain or improve air quality because activities on these lands would be limited in scope and extent.

Development of management prescription for **21** ACECs would help maintain air quality over these areas. Closure of the areas to mineral material sales, fluid mineral leasing, and in some cases closed to locatable mineral entry, off-road vehicle use excluded or limited, and right-of-way authorizations excluded would protect air quality by reducing the amount of dust in the air usually caused by these activities.

Proposal of four new areas for wilderness study would help maintain air quality over these areas because under Interim Management Policy guidelines activities within these areas are limited in scope and extent.

Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, areas closed to off-road vehicle use would maintain air quality over a greater area. Off-road vehicle activity degrades vegetation, and disturbs the soil surface which would increase wind erosion and dust content of the air. Areas limited to off-road vehicle use would help maintain air quality because off-road vehicle use would be limited to existing roads and trails. Areas without existing roads and trails would not be disturbed and air quality away from these roads and trails would not degrade. Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, there is a significant increase in lands with limited use. Areas open to off-road vehicle use, would result in a greater area subjected to vegetation degradation and soil disturbance. Wind erosion would continue to add dust to the air in these areas.

Developing access to 19 areas would reduce air quality during construction and increased use of new and existing roads. Air quality would be reduced from dust content in the air near these areas.

Designation of right-of-way avoidance areas would help maintain air quality because rights-of-way would not be allowed in these areas without special stipulations. Designation of right-of-way exclusion areas would help maintain air quality because soil disturbances and vegetation loss associated with right-of-way activities would not occur. Activities in areas open to (subject to standard stipulations) right-of-way could continue to reduce air quality from construction and vehicle activities over the immediate area. Most air quality reduction occurs during construction maintenance activities.

Activities in areas open to fluid mineral leasing would affect air quality during exploration and development of these resources. Activities such as access, construction, and site preparation during exploration would increase dust levels. Development activities such as access construction, site preparation, utilities construction, would reduce air quality over the area of development. Areas closed to fluid minerals leasing would not be subjected to air quality reduction from fluid mineral leasing activities. Activities in areas open to fluid mineral leasing with site-specific stipulations would not greatly affect air quality. Type of activities would be limited in scope and extent.

Areas open to locatable mineral entry would be subjected to air quality reduction from activities such as construction of access, digging, and exposure of disturbed soil and tailings to wind erosion. Areas closed to locatable mineral entry would not be subjected to soil disturbing activities which would reduce air quality from dust.

Areas open to mineral material disposal would be subjected to air quality reduction, in localized areas, from dust caused by construction and use of access, removal of vegetation, disturbance of topsoil, and exposure to wind which would carry the dust to other locals. Areas closed to mineral material disposal would not be subjected to air quality reduction caused by mineral material disposal activities.

Watershed planning on eight areas would help maintain air quality over these areas through management practices such as improved grazing practices and restrictions on mining, off-road vehicle, and recreation activities. Watershed planning maintains or increases ground cover and reduces soil disturbance.

Vegetation treatments such as prescribed fire and chemical brush control in conjunction with proper grazing practices would be used on up to 10,000 acres/year. Prescribed burning would have short-term effects on air quality from smoke (1 to 3 days).

IN SUMMARY, ACEC **AND** RNA designations, watershed planning, wildlife habitat planning, off-road vehicle designation, restriction for rights-of-way, and vegetation treatments would reduce the amount of dust which enters the air by protecting and enhancing surface vegetation and reducing soil surface disturbance.

Water

Lands identified for disposal would not be managed by BLM and an indirect effect of disposal could be urbanization which would be under the control of State and local authorities. Most lands are on the East and West Mesas near Las Cruces with scattered parcels in Grant and Luna Counties. Acquisition and consolidation of land would help maintain water quality because activities on these lands could be managed to protect the resource and would be limited in scope and extent.

The development of management prescriptions for **21** ACECs **AND 4 RNAs** would protect and enhance surface and ground water resources on these lands. Prescriptions such as closure to mineral material and fluid leasing activities, and in some cases closure to locatable mineral entry, and development or revision of Area Management Plans would protect or enhance surface vegetation, reduce erosion, and increase percolation of water into the ground.

Special actions to protect values identified in the wild and scenic river study for portions of the Gila River which are on public land would limit activities and would provide management to protect and enhance wild and scenic river values such as scenic quality, wildlife and fish, recreation, geology and cultural.

Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, there would be more areas closed to off-road vehicle use. Fewer areas would be subjected to vegetation loss or soil surface disturbance, resulting in decreased water erosion of exposed soil and increased water percolation into the ground would not be reduced. Areas with limited off-road vehicle use to existing or designated roads and trails is significantly higher **NOW**. Where off-road vehicle use is limited to existing or designated roads and trails, this would protect water resources because surface disturbance and vegetation loss would not extend beyond the existing or designated roads and trails over a greater area as it could Alternative A. Areas open to off-road vehicle use compared to Alternative A would result in increased soil disturbance, vegetation loss, and erosion.

Watershed planning on approximately would provide management for land which is subject to excessive water erosion. Activities associated with grazing, mining, recreation, and off-road vehicle use would be managed to improve grazing practices and limit or mitigate mining, recreation and off-road vehicle uses.

Vegetation treatments would consist of prescribed fire and chemical brush control in conjunction with proper grazing practices. Prescribed fires stimulate vegetation growth and increase ground cover which would reduce erosion and increase percolation of water into the ground (Wright and Bailey 1982). There may be a short-term increase in runoff (1 to 3 years) until the area revegetates and ground cover is re-established. Chemical brush control could improve vegetation ground cover, over a period of 1 to 3 years, resulting in decreased erosion and increased percolation of water into the ground.

Exclusion of grazing could increase vegetation ground cover which would reduce runoff and increase percolation of water into the ground.

Secured instream flows for the Gila Lower Box and Gila Middle Box would enhance riparian vegetation communities and stabilize stream banks, which reduces the impacts of flooding by slowing down water flows which allows for increased percolation and sediment collection.

IN SUMMARY, planned actions would protect water resources by designating **21** areas as ACECs **AND 4 AREAS AS RNA**s, interim management of four areas of wilderness study, increased acres of closed and limited off-road vehicle use, watershed planning and vegetation treatments. These actions would enhance or protect surface vegetation, reduce runoff and water erosion of exposed soil, and increase percolation of water into the ground.

WILDLIFE

Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, most of the lands identified for disposal are on the East and West Mesas near Las Cruces. Lands near urban areas could be subjected to development activities which could degrade habitat and reduce wildlife populations such as small mammals, birds, and reptiles. Disposed lands away from urban areas could also be subjected to unregulated activities such as increased grazing, mining, and recreation, which could degrade habitat and displace wildlife. Improved manageability through acquisition and blocking up of lands would benefit wildlife because they may contain additional habitat and possible sensitive habitat for wildlife. Additionally these acquired lands could serve as a buffer for sensitive habitats.

Development of management prescriptions for **21** ACECs **AND 4 RNAs** would benefit wildlife. Prescriptions such as closure to mineral activities, limited off-road vehicle use, and development or revision of Area Management Plans would prevent wildlife habitat degradation and animal displacement.

The addition of four areas for wilderness study and their interim management would help protect and enhance wildlife habitat because activities on these wilderness study areas would be limited in scope and extent. Management of these wilderness study areas may not allow for certain wildlife habitat improvement projects to occur.

Wild and scenic river study for the Gila Lower Box and Gila Middle Box would help protect and enhance riparian wildlife habitat which is found along the river and free flow of water would maintain habitat for fish species (Hubbard, et al. 1985). All activities which could affect wild and scenic river qualities would be limited in scope and extent.

Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, areas closed to off-road vehicle use would not be subjected to habitat degradation from vegetation loss and soil disturbance. Less disturbance to wildlife would also occur. Limiting off-road vehicle use to designated and existing roads and trails, would prevent habitat degradation and wildlife disturbances from areas that are currently undesignated. Some degradation may occur near these roads and trails. Areas open to off-road vehicle use, would increase acreage that would be subjected to habitat degradation and wildlife disturbance (Bury, et al. 1977).

Developing access into 19 additional areas could involve surface disturbing activities such as road construction. New construction could be subject to special stipulations to minimize affects from construction activities.

Designation of right-of-way avoidance areas would prevent or minimize disturbances to wildlife and wildlife habitat. If a right-of-way is needed through these lands then stipulations would be required to minimize habitat degradation. Right-of-way exclusion areas would not be subjected to activities which would degrade habitat or displace wildlife. Areas open to right-of-way (subject to standard stipulations) would be subjected to habitat degradation and wildlife disturbance from activities associated with installation of utilities and vehicle use along the right-of-way.

Land open to fluid mineral leasing activities would affect wildlife by site-specific habitat degradation and wildlife disturbances during exploration activities such as access construction and drilling. Prolonged development of fluid minerals resources would degrade habitat and reduce wildlife populations from larger areas which include developed fields, access, and utilities such as pipelines. Areas closed to fluid mineral leasing would not be subjected to fluid mineral leasing activities which would degrade habitat. Designation of areas open to fluid mineral leasing with site specific stipulations would limit or reduce impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat.

Activities in areas open to locatable mineral entry would involve access construction, drilling, site levelling and clearing for storage of equipment, minerals and tailings would degrade habitat and reduce wildlife populations from the areas of activity. Effects from exploration activities would be short-term while the development of mines would have long-term effects. Areas withdrawn from locatable mineral entry, would not be subjected to exploration and development activities which would degrade habitat.

Extraction of salable mineral materials results in the removal of surface vegetation and soil surface, construction of access roads, and clearing and levelling of a site for storage and placement of equipment and mineral material. These activities would degrade habitat. Areas closed to mineral material disposal would not be subjected to mineral disposal activities which would degrade habitat and displace wildlife.

Continued implementation of six existing HMPs, and the development of six additional HMPs would benefit wildlife by protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat in these areas. At present, these areas have an estimated population of 1,680 deer, **APPROXIMATELY 120** desert bighorn sheep, and 500 antelope (most of which occur on private or State trust lands). Proposed minimum population levels in these existing and proposed HMP areas would result in an increase of 2,270 deer, a 58 percent increase over present, **600** desert bighorn sheep, and 300 antelope occurring primarily on public land.

Development of watershed plans for eight critical watershed areas would protect and enhance wildlife habitat components (vegetation and soil) by management activities such as erosion control projects, grazing management, and recreation management.

Vegetation treatments would consist of prescribed fire and chemical brush control in conjunction with proper grazing practices. Prescribed fire projects would affect wildlife by altering habitat. Habitat improvements realized from prescribed fires on fire dependant vegetation communities are increased browse and forage, increased habitat diversity, and a continuation of natural vegetation community development (Wright and Bailey 1982). Chemical brush control would increase forage and improve habitat diversity.

Exclusion of grazing would reduce competition between livestock and wildlife (where it occurs) in key habitats (particularly for desert bighorn sheep) for forage, cover and space (Sandoval 1982; BLM 1986).

IN SUMMARY, under **THE PROPOSED PLAN** wildlife would benefit from increased acreage withdrawn from mineral activity, elimination of grazing on key habitat areas, extensive off-road vehicle limitations, watershed planning, vegetation treatments and increased number of ACEC **AND RNA** designations. These actions would protect or enhance habitat and prevent habitat degradation.

CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Acquisition or disposal of land can cause varied impacts to cultural resources. For example, acquisition of a significant Apachean site or Paleoindian camp or kill site would enhance the diversity of sites within the Mimbres Resource Area since few sites of this type are currently documented. Conversely, disposal of sites of this type would reduce site diversity on the Mimbres Resource Area.

Acquisition of lands which contain significant sites such as Fort Cummings and Los Tules would facilitate cultural resource goals. Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, some private land within the cultural ACECs would be acquired **IF A WILLING SELLER AGREED TO THE PROPOSAL.** At Cooke's Range ACEC, acquisition of the private 40-acre portion of Fort Cummings would facilitate the development of the Fort as a recreation/ interpretive site. Acquisition of the private 10-acre portion of the Los Tules site would enhance preservation efforts for the entire site area.

Impacts to cultural resources eligible to the National Register of Historic Places located within lands identified for disposal are mitigated through excavation and other methods. These mitigative efforts result in determinations of "no adverse effect through data recovery." However, these data recovery methods treat only portions of sites and some data is lost. In addition, modern excavation techniques will be considered primitive by future researchers.

Through ACEC designation, cultural resource sites and areas significant on a National level could be given special management attention to protect the cultural values resulting in additional protection of the resources. ACEC management prescriptions would provide for phased, long-term protective actions for the affected sites.

Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN, 21** areas would be designated as ACECs **AND 4 AREAS AS RNAs. NINE** ACECs (Alamo Hueco Mountains, Apache Box, Cooke's Range, Doña Ana Mountains, Los Tules, Old Town, Rincon, Organ/Franklin Mountains, **AND** San Diego Mountain) have significant cultural resource values. **THE PROPOSED PALEOZOIC TRACKWAYS RNA HAS SIGNIFICANT PALEONTOLOGICAL VALUE.** Significant prehistoric rock art (petroglyphs) would be protected at Doña Ana Mountains, Rincon, Cooke's Range, and San Diego Mountain ACECs. In the Alamo Hueco Mountains, rockshelters and open sites representative of the Archaic through Apachean periods would be offered additional protection. Prehistoric rockshelter habitation sites would be protected within Apache Box. In Cooke's Range and Fort Cummings, historic mining sites and prehistoric open sites would receive additional protection. The significant Mogollon pithouse village of Los Tules and the large Mimbres village of Old Town would also be protected. In the Organ/Franklin Mountains, historic mining and resort sites would be protected. Also, open sites and rockshelters representative of habitation sites of the Archaic through Apache periods would be offered additional protection.

Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, the Butterfield Trail and associated stage stations would be designated a SMA resulting in specific management prescriptions for the preservation, protection, and public interpretation of the trail.

Closing or limiting off-road vehicle travel would impact cultural resources within the closure areas. Designating public land open to off-road vehicle travel could affect cultural sites where future off-road vehicle travel may occur. Increased unauthorized collection and vandalism would be expected to occur in the new open areas. The acquisition of legal public access in the Cooke's Range would result in increased vandalism to historic mining sites and prehistoric sites located **IN CURRENT LIMITED ACCESS AREAS.**

Encouraging the use of right-of-way corridors would lessen affects on cultural resources by concentrating major rights-of-way in specific areas. Avoiding cultural ACECs with rights-of-way would result in reduced ground disturbances and visual intrusions to cultural resources within the ACECs.

The withdrawal from locatable mineral entry would result in additional protection of cultural resources located within **THREE** ACECs **AND ONE RNA**. Apache Box ACEC is known to contain several rockshelter habitation sites. Cooke's Peak ACEC contains the remains of historic mining sites. Archaic and Mogollon period sites, as well as possible Apachean sites. The Organ/Franklin ACEC contains rockshelter habitation sites, historic mining sites, Archaic and Mogollon open sites. The Paleozoic Trackways **RNA** includes internationally significant 280-million-year-old amphibian and reptile trackways.

Mining activity usually results in more access roads and therefore easier access to cultural sites by the general public and miners. Easier access to cultural sites usually results in vandalism of unprotected sites. Ground disturbance related to mining activity that can affect cultural resources includes, but is not limited to, blasting, construction of new access roads, creation of staging areas, core drilling, and trenching with heavy machinery. Any degradation of cultural resources would result in irreversible and irretrievable losses of information.

The effects of vegetation use through livestock grazing are generally low-level, except where conditions combine to concentrate cattle. Proximity to water, certain types of forage, natural barriers, or fences can result in channeling cattle to result in intensive trampling of artifacts and archaeological features, as well as increased site erosion. Eliminating livestock grazing by the construction of enclosures reduces these impacts.

Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, the Old Town Site, Fort Cummings, and the Dripping Springs Natural Area would be excluded from livestock grazing which would reduce cattle trampling of these sites. Class III cultural inventories would be conducted at Fort Cummings, San Diego Mountain, Pony Hills, and Rincon ACECs. These inventories would result in the location, identification, and description of archaeological sites which would allow for more intensive protection and management efforts at these sites.

Historic trails and roads within the Mimbres Resource Area such as the Camino Real, Santa Rita Copper Trail, Spanish exploration routes, and historic emigrant wagon roads would be researched and provide a basis for more intensive management and interpretation of these resources.

Historic mining towns and features at the Cooke, Jose, Stephenson-Bennett, Modoc, Tres Hermanas, Pyramids, Piño Altos, Peloncillos, Floridas, and Carlisle/Summit would be subjected to historic field and records research resulting in more detailed knowledge of the historical significance of these sites. This additional research would lead to better interpretation of the sites to the general public. Archaeological field schools would be initiated or continued at several sites including Old Town, Bruton Bead, Indian Basin, East Potrillo, South Florida, and Camp Cody. These field schools would help establish the significance and research potential of these sites and enhance BLM's abilities to properly manage these localities. This research would result in better communication with the public and greater interpretation of the resources to the public.

Public access to important rockshelter sites such as Apache Box would be restricted through the use of metal grates over some of the shelter openings. In addition, these sites would be subjected to increased patrols and monitoring which would provide greater security and protection.

An effort to acquire significant Butterfield Stage Sites would be initiated which would result in the protection, stabilization, and public interpretation of these important sites. Old Town and Pony Hills would be intensively managed in accordance with the provisions of the Mimbres Culture Study legislation, and the BLM portion of the Redrock Cemetery Site would be transferred to the National Park Service. These actions would result in reduced vandalism at the sites and enhanced public interpretation.

The Paleozoic Trackways Site would be intensively managed in accordance with the provisions of the Paleozoic Trackways legislation. This would result in greater protection and monitoring at the site and possibly the construction of an interpretive center. Environmental education would be stressed at the center. In addition, paleontological surveys would be **ENCOURAGED AND FACILITATED** in the Robledo Mountains, Aden Lava Flow, and Alamo Hueco Mountains. These surveys could result in the identification of new paleontological localities. This identification would result in new research at these sites and greater protection through monitoring and patrol. These discoveries would also enhance the BLM's public education efforts regarding paleontological resources in New Mexico.

Protection of riparian areas reduces erosion at cultural sites. Riparian areas typically have high concentrations of historic and prehistoric sites.

IN SUMMARY, under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, State trust and private lands would be identified for acquisition. Additional cultural resources located on these lands would come under BLM administration and protection. Nine ACECs with cultural resource values would be designated resulting in implementable management prescriptions for these resources. Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, most of the Mimbres Resource Area would be designated either limited or closed to off-road vehicle use. These designations would limit public access to unprotected cultural resources and decrease damage and vandalism associated with increased public access. The acquisition of legal public access in the Cooke's Range would result in increased vandalism to cultural resources located beyond the existing locked gates. Encouraging the use of right-of-way corridors would reduce ground disturbance and visual intrusions of cultural resources. Closing portions of the Mimbres Resource Area to mineral entry, mineral disposal, and fluid leasing would reduce the number of new access roads and result in decreased vandalism and damage to cultural resources within those areas. Reduction of soil erosion in riparian areas would reduce damage through erosion to the associated cultural resources located in and near riparian areas.

RECREATION

Disposal of public land would reduce the amount of public land in the Resource Area by 5 percent, although there would not be a significant reduction in recreation opportunities in much of the Resource Area because isolated parcels of disposal lands are currently inaccessible to recreationists. The expansion of the proposed Organ Mountains National Conservation Area would reduce the loss of dispersed recreation opportunities on the East Mesa under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**. However, disposal of public land adjacent to the City of Las Cruces would reduce opportunities for walking, hunting, shooting, mountain biking, and other recreation uses. Urbanization of some of these disposed lands would create new opportunities for developed recreation in parks, schoolyards, road biking, and other urban uses. Access acquisition and construction to other well-blocked public land in the Resource Area would more than compensate for a 5 percent decrease in public land acreage. Acquisition of State trust and private lands would effectively negate any significant loss in land available for recreation in the Resource Area.

Acquisition of lands in ACECs and other SMAs throughout the Resource Area would improve recreation opportunities in those areas by improving public land patterns and reducing conflicts associated with land ownership boundaries. Recreation on those lands would not differ significantly from that on existing adjacent public land, but legal public access to those areas for recreation would improve while the potential for conflicting development would greatly diminish. The natural character of acquired lands would be protected, enhancing most dispersed outdoor recreation opportunities in which quality is generally enhanced by a lack of human development and disturbance. Acquisition would also enable BLM to provide facilities for developed recreation, such as parking lots and trailheads.

Dispersed recreation opportunities for which quality is enhanced by increased naturalness in the setting such as hunting, hiking, and picnicking would benefit from vehicle closures or limitations (99.5 percent of the Resource Area) including ACECs. ACEC designation would restrict vehicular recreation in some areas to protect fragile riparian, scenic, cultural, endangered species, and other resources. Vehicular access for other forms of recreation would not be significantly affected by wilderness study area and ACEC designations.

Acquisition of lands and development of a Continental Divide National Scenic Trail route from the Burro Mountains through the Cedar, Little Hatchet, Big Hatchet, and Alamo Hueco Mountains **AND A SIDE TRAIL THROUGH THE FLORIDA MOUNTAINS AND COOKE'S RANGE,** would enhance opportunities for long distance hiking both locally and nationally, as this segment would **HELP TO** complete the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail as a designated route from Mexico to Canada. Such designation would also enhance opportunities for other primitive and unconfined types of recreation by improving foot access to and across public land near the trail, and by protecting scenic quality with a right-of-way avoidance area.

Development of access routes would enhance the public's ability to enjoy outdoor recreation throughout the Resource Area for dispersed types of recreation including hunting, rockhounding, hiking, and birdwatching. Enhancement of these opportunities would be provided throughout the Resource Area in areas where public land is well-blocked and recreation access is desired by the public. Recreation users would also benefit from access development to **AND** across public land as additional County, State, and Federal roads are built.

Vehicle recreation would be greatly enhanced by the development of new right-of-way routes, livestock development **ACCESS ROUTES**, and exploration and development routes associated with leasable, salable, and locatable minerals. Access development would also provide significant impacts to opportunities for other types of recreation as new routes for vehicular access to and across public land allow recreationists to conduct their myriad recreation uses on most public land in the Resource Area. New rights-of-way would be excluded from 264,870 acres and avoided in 818,770 acres, and new vehicular access routes for recreation would not be likely to occur in these 1,083,640 acres as a result of right-of-way development. New vehicular recreation and access routes most likely would be established as a result of right-of-way activities in the intermountain desert areas that cover most of the Resource Area, while construction of roads and land acquisition would provide access over most of the remainder of the Resource Area.

Primitive recreation opportunities within right-of-way avoidance and exclusion areas, areas closed to fluid mineral leasing, closed to mineral disposal, and closed to locatable mineral entry would be enhanced by the maintenance of pristine conditions and the lack of disrupting activities that could degrade the natural quality of outdoor experiences on public land.

Development of new campgrounds in the Doña Ana Mountains and the Gila Lower Box would expand opportunities for developed recreation in the Resource Area by up to 50 percent. Management of the Gila Lower Box and the Organ Mountains under their respective Coordinated Resource Management Plans, Fort Cummings under the existing Cultural Resources Management Plan, and the Doña Ana Mountains under a Recreation Area Management Plan would enhance both developed and dispersed recreation opportunities in these areas while protecting other significant resources. Interpretation of natural values in ACECs and cultural and paleontological values at sites such as Butterfield stage stops, Fort Cummings, Massacre Peak, and the Paleozoic Trackways Site would add diversity to the recreation opportunities available within the Resource Area. The addition of new interpretive sites would increase interpretive recreation potential within the Resource Area, while materials from sites such as the Paleozoic Trackways Site may be displayed in locally, regionally, and even internationally significant museums including the Carnegie Institute Museum of Natural History and the Smithsonian Institution. Overall, recreation visits could be expected to increase to 280,000 per year.

Wildlife habitat improvement within the guidelines of habitat management plans in concert with game management by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish could allow increases in game to sustain increased populations of deer, pronghorn, and small game for the enjoyment of nonconsumptive wildlife users including photographers and bird watchers as well as consumptive wildlife recreationists like hunters and fishermen. Pronghorn habitat management in the Columbus, Cooke's Range/Nutt, Robledo Mountains, and Cedar Mountains would provide significantly greater opportunities for pronghorn hunting in the Resource Area. Deer and small game hunting quality would improve in those areas plus the Uvas Mountains and the West Potrillo Mountains. Habitat management plans and associated herd management by the Department of Game and Fish should also lead to the recovery of mule deer in the Organ Mountains and deer and desert bighorn sheep in the Peloncillo, Big Hatchet, and Alamo Hueco Mountains to levels that could sustain regular harvests.

Development and implementation of watershed management plans and grazing management plans and establishment of instream flows in the Gila Middle and Lower Box ACECs would all improve the quality of hunting in those areas as ground cover increases, particularly for small game and game birds. Furthermore, other recreation uses for which quality is enhanced by increased naturalness such as hiking, and photography would benefit from these actions.

Bird watching along riparian areas including the Gila Lower Box and Guadalupe Canyon would **IMPROVE** from riparian habitat management as vegetation structural and species diversity flourish. Instream flow establishment would protect the warm water fisheries as well as other types of riparian recreation in the Middle and Lower Boxes, which provide the vast majority of fishing opportunities in the Resource Area. Riparian and arroyo habitat management have the greatest potential to improve hunting quality for big game, small game, and game birds of any management practice in the Resource Area. Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, such improvements would be realized in the Apache Box, San Simon Cienega, Gila Lower Box, Gila Middle Box, Organ Mountains, Guadalupe Canyon, and Placitas Arroyo Riparian Demonstration Project. The quality of other recreation opportunities in the Gila River Canyon including rafting and kayaking would also be protected by instream flows.

IN SUMMARY, land ownership adjustments under **THE PROPOSED PLAN** would have significant impacts on recreation opportunities throughout the Resource Area, both from consolidating public land and thereby improving access and reducing potential management conflicts, and from acquisition and development of new access routes and recreation sites. Vehicle designations would restrict vehicle use opportunities to either existing or designated roads and trails over 95 percent of the Resource Area, while 4 percent would be closed to vehicle use and less than 1 percent would be open to all vehicle use. Development of access routes would improve hunting, hiking, and many other recreation opportunities throughout most of the Resource Area. Right-of-way exclusions and mineral development restrictions would enhance preservation of the natural integrity and primitive recreation quality of ACECs. Wildlife habitat management would allow increases in hunting opportunities for pronghorn, deer, and small game. Watershed and grazing management would improve the quality of primitive recreation opportunities such as hunting on portions of the Resource Area. Establishment of instream flows would ensure the maintenance of warm water fishing opportunities and other recreation qualities in the Gila Middle and Lower Boxes.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, visual resource management could benefit from the acquisition of State trust and private land, much of which is within Class I and II areas. The acquired lands would be managed in conformance with VRM guidelines that should impede any uses of those acquired lands from altering the form, line, color, or texture of the natural landscape. Disposal of public land would significantly reduce the number of small public land parcels in Class II, III, and IV areas. Despite the inclusion of Class II and III areas, disposal of these isolated parcels would not have a significant effect on the scenic quality of landscapes because actions that could degrade scenery are much more likely to occur on non-Federal lands that currently predominate these landscapes. Conversely, acquisition of non-Federal inholdings in currently well-blocked public land would prevent activities in those areas that could degrade viewsheds on public land. Disposed lands adjacent to Las Cruces would likely become urbanized, leading to significant alteration of the basic visual elements over much of the mesa between Las Cruces and the Organ Mountains.

ACEC designations would constrain activities that could degrade scenic quality on 313,870 acres, including **153,340** acres that would be managed as VRM Class I areas because of Scenic ACEC designations.

Wilderness study designation of the Organ Needles, Gray Peak, Apache Box, and Peña Blanca areas would limit activities to conform with VRM Class II guidelines.

Vehicle closures would prevent degradation of visual resources by vehicle use, while vehicle limitations would limit new vehicle trail impacts on visual resources over most of the Resource Area. The Aden Hills and Lordsburg South Playa would be subject to visual impacts of new vehicle trails, which should not be significantly noticeable from anywhere for the Lordsburg Playa, but may be noticeable from Interstate 10 and some Doña Ana County roads for the Aden Hills Open Area.

Right-of-way avoidance and exclusion areas, and areas closed to locatable mineral entry, mineral material disposal, or fluid mineral leasing would have significant reductions in the potential for conflict between surface activities and VRM guidelines as compared with **WHAT EXISTS NOW.** Areas open to rights-of-way and mineral leasing, sale, and location are mainly within VRM Class III and IV areas, and stipulations will be included to ensure conformance of any actions within these areas to VRM Class III or IV guidelines, whichever is appropriate. Locatable minerals actions would likely cause degradation of scenic quality in some Class II areas although four areas would be closed to locatable mineral entry, mostly in the Organ and Franklin Mountains.

Wildlife habitat, land treatment, and watershed management actions would allow improvement in vegetation resources that could alter the colors and textures of landscapes, enhancing the natural scenic quality of large areas of public land while potentially creating contrasts in scenic vistas between the improved areas and adjacent untreated lands.

Instream flows would benefit the visual resources of the Gila River Canyon, in which the riparian community provides integral color, textural, and structural components of the landscape. Protection of the riparian community through instream flow acquisition is essential to maintain the lines, colors, and textures which enhance scenic qualities of the Gila Canyon.

IN SUMMARY, land ownership adjustments would impact visual resource management as lands in Class I and II areas are acquired, enhancing visual resource management of entire landscapes where current land ownership patterns preclude such management. Scenic ACEC, wilderness, wild river, or scenic river designations would protect visual resources to prevent any but the most limited management alterations to the natural forms, lines, colors, and textures of the landscape. Vehicle designations covering over 99 percent of the Resource Area would limit new roads or off-road vehicle use from causing disturbances that could degrade scenic quality throughout the Resource Area exclusive of the Aden Hills and Lordsburg South Playa. Visual resources would gain increased protection from right-of-way exclusion and avoidance areas and areas closed to locatable mineral entry, salable mineral development, or fluid mineral leasing. Locatable mineral development would likely degrade scenic quality in some Class II areas. Large scale vegetation changes from wildlife habitat management and watershed stabilization could gradually create some contrasts in colors and textures of landscapes.

WILDERNESS

Acquisition of inholdings within WSAs and wilderness areas would improve manageability of those lands in a manner that would enhance the wilderness characteristics of both the acquired lands and adjacent wilderness study area or wilderness area lands. Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, State trust and private lands could be acquired to enhance management of those areas for naturalness and for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Existing developments and uses of those acquired lands would not be curtailed, although management actions might be tailored to mitigate impacts of those developments and uses to conform to the Interim Management Policy.

INTERIM MANAGEMENT OF LANDS UNDER wilderness study in the Apache Box, Gray Peak, Organ Needles, and Peña Blanca areas would **PROTECT** highly scenic areas, historic sites, and habitat for endangered species.

Wild or scenic river study of the Gila Lower Box unit would enhance wilderness qualities of the portion of the unit that overlaps with the Gila Lower Box WSA. Such a designation would elevate protection of a portion of the WSA pending wilderness designation. If the Lower Box is designated as both wilderness and a wild or scenic river, the two designations would provide overlapping protection of the river corridor, enhancing the naturalness of the area.

Vehicle limitations would enhance wilderness values by diminishing man's ability to degrade natural qualities of the areas.

Development of access routes would enhance the ability of wilderness users to reach and enjoy diverse areas, enhancing opportunities to enjoy opportunities for solitude and primitive or unconfined types of recreation.

Data retrieval and research on cultural and paleontological sites in the Apache Box, Gray Peak, Organ Needles, and Peña Blanca areas would be constrained by the Interim Management Policy.

Acquisition of instream flows would enhance wilderness qualities by stabilizing important natural ecosystem components, leading to improvement in opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation such as hunting, fishing, hiking, nature study, and photography.

Vegetation treatments would only be allowed within WSAs to the extent they conform to the Interim Management Policy, including prescribed fire when it can be proven to be a natural component of the ecosystem. Livestock grazing manipulation would be allowed as a vegetation treatment provided that it leads to improvement in the natural condition of the area as a whole, and it does not contribute to a decline in the ecological condition of vegetation within the WSA.

IN SUMMARY, actions and activities would not be allowed in WSAs and wilderness areas that could impair natural values. Acquisition of State trust and private lands, wilderness designations, wild or scenic river designations, vehicle closures and limitations, access development, implementation of wildlife habitat management plans, watershed stabilization, fire management, livestock grazing management, and establishment of instream flows would all have benefits to wilderness resources and uses by improving the stability of natural systems and resulting in increased naturalness of wilderness resources.

SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES (T&E)

Plants

Lands identified for disposal in the valley and on the mesa east and west of Las Cruces, contain prime potential habitat (sand dunes) for the sand prickly pear cactus. An additional section of land near Berino, that is currently identified for disposal, would be added to the proposed Organ Mountains National Conservation Area designation to further protect this plant and its habitat. This parcel contains the largest known population of this species. A mitigation plan has been developed for this species. A pad or stem from plants on land identified for disposal are transplanted to a new site to maintain the genetic pool. Night-blooming cereus, which is very hard to locate and grows in creosotebush areas could also occur in disposal areas. The multiple-use management of 2,895,360 acres of public land and the acquisition of private and State trust lands would protect special status plants and their habitat as well as bring additional habitats under Federal protection.

SMAs and ACECs, especially in the Organ Mountains, would provide additional protection and management of all species and their habitat found in these areas. There are at least 24 potential or listed Federal or State species in the Organ Mountain area. The Sneed's pincushion cactus is found on the south end of the mountain range. Most of the ACECs **AND RNAs** have been identified for their biological values and several have identified special status plants such as *Atriplex griffithsii,* a saltbush identified on the Lordsburg Playa. Management plans balancing livestock, wildlife and recreational use would provide long-term protection for these plants and their habitat. All areas would be either closed to vehicle use or limit the use to designated roads and trails which would keep plant theft and damage to the habitat from off-road vehicle use to a minimum. The **ADDITION** of four areas for wilderness **STUDY,** by the nature of the limited access and management policy, would add a measure of protection to special status plants and their habitat.

Areas designated as open to vehicle use would have a site-specific clearance done before the area was used in order to avoid impacts to special status species plants. Limiting vehicle use to limited or designated roads and trails would limit potential plant theft which is a real problem with special status species plants. Special status species plant habitat would also be further protected from off-road vehicle use. Closed areas would provide long-term protection for plant species and their habitat.

New access routes could open up new areas to plant collection and habitat loss.

Designation of right-of-way corridors and exclusion/avoidance areas would prevent or keep habitat loss to minimum in those areas.

Mineral actions, withdrawing or closing areas to mineral entry, would provide long-term protection to special status species plants and their habitat. Areas open to leasing would follow the standard procedures for these actions. Long-term loss would be mitigated by reclamation stipulations. **ALTHOUGH BLM HAS NO DISCRETIONARY AUTHORITY TO APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE NOTICE LEVEL (5 ACRES OR LESS) ACTIVITIES, CLAIMANTS AND OPERATORS ARE LEGALLY OBLIGATED TO ABIDE BY THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT WHILE CONDUCTING OPERATIONS.**

Developed recreation areas would provide special protective measures for special status species plants and their habitat in the area. These areas would provide for interpretative and educational awareness of the biological values in the area. Visitors would be limited to specific areas which protects the existing plants and their habitat. The Dripping Springs Natural Area and Aguirre Spring Recreation Area are good examples.

Watershed activity plans would provide for soil stabilization which improves vegetation cover. These plans could indirectly protect existing species and their habitat and provide for future populations.

Vegetation sale areas have a site-specific clearance done to ensure that no special status plants are affected. The desired plant community outlined under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, identifies many brush dominated areas for treatment by a chemical herbicide. The night-blooming cereus, which depends on creosotebush for structural support would be more visible if it occurred in a brush control area. The elimination of livestock grazing on 8,026 acres could add some measure of protection to special status plants and their habitat.

Riparian and arroyo habitats have the majority of special status species plants in the Resource Area. The exclusion of grazing, and the improved management proposed in the SMA and ACEC management prescription of these areas would enhance and permanently protect species and their habitat.

IN SUMMARY, multiple-use management and acquisition of land, SMAs and ACECs, vehicle use limited to existing or designated roads and trails, watershed activity plans, and the elimination of livestock grazing would have short- and long-term benefits to special status plants by protection through the BLM's mandate to enhance and protect the lands it administers, limiting use or avoiding an area all together. Land disposal actions would have short- and long-term impacts from the loss of potential habitat.

Animals

Acquisition and consolidation of lands would provide improved manageability and additional habitat for special status species as well as provide a buffer around special status species habitat. Sensitive species such as desert bighorn sheep and various raptors and reptiles would benefit from these acquisitions.

The designation of **21** ACECs **AND 4 RNAs** would protect special status species such as desert bighorn sheep, Gila monster, peregrine falcon, and the spikedace and loachminnow. Closure of habitat to mineral material and fluid mineral leasing and in some cases closure to locatable mineral entry, off-road vehicle limitations, exclusion of right-of-way authorization, and development or revision of Allotment Management Plans would protect special status species habitat and prevent animal displacement.

Proposal of four new areas for wilderness study would help protect special status species habitat from disturbance and degradation. The study area would help protect habitat for desert bighorn sheep, reptiles such as the Gila monster, raptors such as the peregrine falcon, and two species of fish (spikedace and loachminnow).

IMPLEMENTATION OF the wild and scenic river study for the Gila River would protect habitat for special status species such as the spikedace and loachminnow (Hubbard 1985) as well as protect riparian habitat which supports numerous sensitive status species such as raptors, small birds, and reptiles.

PROPOSED PLAN

Closure of areas closed to off-road vehicle use which contain special status species habitat such as the Gila Lower Box, Gila Middle Box, Apache Box, and Guadalupe Canyon would prevent habitat degradation and special status species disturbance. Limiting off-road vehicle use to existing or designated roads and trails would prevent special status species habitat degradation and animal disturbance on areas that are currently undesignated. Use of designated roads and trails in areas with special status species and habitat could result in habitat degradation and animal disturbance near these roads and trails if excessive use occurs.

In areas open to fluid mineral leasing with special stipulations, special stipulations such as no surface occupancy and seasonal use restrictions are used to mitigate impacts to special status species such as the desert bighorn sheep.

MOST MINERAL EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES OCCUR UNDER A MINING NOTICE (SURFACE DISTURBANCE OF 5 ACRES OR LESS). ALTHOUGH THE BLM HAS NO DISCRETIONARY AUTHORITY TO APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE NOTICE LEVEL ACTIVITIES, CLAIMANTS AND OPERATORS ARE LEGALLY OBLIGATED TO ABIDE BY THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT WHILE CONDUCTING ACTIVITIES ON FEDERAL CLAIMS. THEY MUST ENSURE ALL OPERATIONS ARE CONDUCTED TO PREVENT UNNECESSARY AND UNDUE DEGRADATION OF THE FEDERAL LANDS, AND SHALL COMPLY WITH ALL PERTINENT FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS. DURING THE COURSE OF OPERATIONS, THE BLM HAS REGULATORY AUTHORITY TO PREVENT ADVERSE IMPACTS TO THREATENED OR ENDANGERED SPECIES AND THE HABITATS WHICH MAY BE AFFECTED UNDER A NOTICE (43 CFR 3809.2-2(d). MINING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED ON MORE THAN 5 ACRES REQUIRE A PLAN OF OPERATIONS FOR WHICH NEPA REQUIRES ANALYSIS BY AN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT. ANY POTENTIAL AFFECTS TO THREATENED OR ENDANGERED SPECIES WILL BE MITIGATED THROUGH THIS PROCESS. Areas which contain significant special status habitat which would be closed to locatable mineral entry include Apache Box, Guadalupe Canyon, and the Organ Mountains. These areas would not be subjected to habitat degradation.

Two existing SRMAs, the Organ Mountains and the Gila Lower Box, contain special status animal habitat. Recreation activities in the Organ Mountains are mostly limited to existing and maintained trails and campgrounds. Limited hiking and camping occurs on some existing but unmaintained sites in the Organ Mountains and the Gila Lower Box. The remainder of the Resource Area is managed for dispersed recreation and is subject to unrestricted hiking and camping. These activities are of short duration usually occurring during hunting seasons. Special status species such as desert bighorn sheep, and their habitat may be subjected to this short-term disturbance.

Continued implementation of the six existing HMPs will provide protection to special status animal habitat, such as desert bighorn sheep, which occur in these areas. Activities which may occur in these areas are generally limited in their scope and extent by existing management guidelines.

Watershed planning on areas which have special status animal habitat (Gila Lower Box and Big Hatchet Mountains) would enhance special status species habitat because activities such as grazing, mineral development, and recreation would be managed to reduce erosion, and maintain or enhance the vegetation community and diversity.

Exclusion of grazing (in Red Rock Game Farm, Central Peloncillo Mountains, Bear Creek, Organ Mountains) would prevent habitat disturbance for special status species such as desert bighorn sheep (Sandoval 1982) because competition for forage and cover with livestock and habitat degradation from range developments would not occur.

Secured instream flows in the Gila River would protect special status species habitat (loachminnow and spikedace) (Hubbard, et al. 1985) and enhance riparian habitats which support several threatened and endangered birds and reptiles.

IN SUMMARY, under **THE PROPOSED PLAN** threatened and endangered animals would benefit from increased land acquisition, ACEC **AND RNA** designations, wild and scenic river study for the

Gila River, increased land with off-road vehicle restrictions, increased mineral withdrawals, watershed planning and elimination of grazing from key habitat areas. Additional habitat could be acquired, special status animal habitat would be protected from degradation, and animal displacement would not occur.

RIPARIAN AND ARROYO HABITATS

Improved manageability of acquired lands which contain riparian and arroyo habitats would protect and enhance their values. Activities associated with grazing, mining, and recreation would be managed to provide the least amount of disturbance to the area.

The development of management prescriptions for **21 ACECs AND 4 RNAs** would protect and enhance riparian and arroyo habitat resources within these areas. The closure of areas to mineral material sales, off-road vehicle limitations, and the development or revision of Allotment Management Plans would prevent or limit the degradation of riparian and arroyo habitat vegetation and soil. Arroyo channels or stream banks (Gila River, Bear Creek, Apache Box, Guadalupe Canyon) in these areas would be protected.

The wild and scenic river study and associated protective measures for the Gila River would protect and enhance the riparian values on public land along the river. All activities which would impair wild and scenic river qualities would be limited in scope and extent.

Areas closed to off-road vehicle use which contain riparian and arroyo habitat areas would not be subjected to activities which would degrade riparian and arroyo habitat. Areas where off-road vehicle use is limited to existing or designated roads and trails and which contain riparian and arroyo habitats would be subjected to limited disturbance wherever an existing road or trail crossed one of these areas. However, most off-road vehicle use on these roads and trails would not affect riparian and arroyo habitat areas.

Designation of right-of-way avoidance areas would limit the effects on riparian and arroyo habitat areas. If a right-of-way is needed through these areas then special stipulations would be required to minimize degradation of these areas. Right-of-way exclusion areas would not be subjected to degradation of riparian and arroyo habitat areas from activities which occur in the installation of utilities within right-of-way corridors.

Within areas open to fluid mineral leasing, there are numerous seeps, springs, and arroyo habitats. Activities associated with the exploration and development of fluid mineral leasing such as access construction, site levelling, drilling, and utility construction would degrade riparian and arroyo habitat vegetation and disturb soil along stream and arroyo channels. Areas closed to fluid mineral leasing which contain riparian and arroyo habitat will not be affected by activities associated with fluid mineral leasing. Site-specific stipulations for fluid mineral leasing would limit disturbance to riparian and arroyo habitat areas.

Exploration and development of locatable minerals on areas less than 5 acres could result in site-specific habitat degradation from access construction, site levelling, mining, and deposition of tailings. Activities on 5 acres or more require a plan of operation which would be analyzed in an Environmental Assessment to mitigate the effects of mining activity. Several areas that would be withdrawn from locatable mineral entry contain important riparian areas. These areas are Apache Box, Guadalupe Canyon, and the Organ Mountains. Activities associated with the exploration and development of locatable minerals would not occur and there would not be any impacts to riparian and arroyo habitats.

Mineral sales which occur in arroyo habitat areas would affect these areas because activities such as construction of access, material removal, and mineral storage would remove vegetation, disturb stream bank and arroyo stabilization, and alter flow of water down the arroyo. Arroyo habitat within areas closed to mineral material sales would not be subjected to mineral material sales activities which would degrade arroyo habitats.

Management of the two existing SRMAs (Organ Mountains, Gila Lower Box), would continue; two additional SRMAs designated; and the remainder of the Resource Area would be managed for dispersed recreation. Recreation activities (hiking, camping) which could affect riparian and arroyo habitat within the Organ Mountains are limited to designated and maintained trails and campgrounds at Dripping Springs Natural Area and Aguirre Spring Recreation Area. Recreational activities (hiking, camping) which occur at the Gila Lower Box are usually limited to established, undesignated, unmaintained trails and camping areas. The Gila Lower Box subject to unrestricted hiking and camping, and riparian and arroyo habitat degradation, such as erosion and vegetation loss, may occur where use is concentrated. However, these activities (which are mainly related to hunting and camping) tend to be of short duration (several days a year).

The continued implementation of six existing HMPs and the development of six additional HMPs would provide protection to the riparian and arroyo habitat resource in these areas because activities which may occur would be limited in scope and extent.

Watershed planning would enhance and protect riparian and arroyo habitat resources within these areas. Watershed planning would prevent vegetation ground cover loss, stream bank and arroyo disturbance would be minimized, and erosion would be reduced. Activities such as grazing management, erosion control projects, mineral exploration and development, and recreation would be managed to mitigate disturbance to the resource.

Grazing would be excluded from significant riparian areas such as the Gila Lower Box and Bear Creek. Riparian and arroyo habitats within these areas would not be impacted by livestock grazing. Erosion, stream bank and arroyo habitat channel disturbance may be reduced through increased ground cover. Intensive grazing use causing vegetation depletion in riparian and arroyo habitat areas would not occur.

Secured instream flows for the Gila River would enhance and protect riparian vegetation communities and stabilize stream banks which reduces the impacts of flooding by slowing down water flows which increases sediment deposition and percolation of water into the ground.

IN SUMMARY, under **THE PROPOSED PLAN** riparian and arroyo habitats would benefit from ACEC **AND RNA** designations, wild and scenic river study, areas withdrawn from mining and grazing activities, increased areas with off-road vehicle restrictions and wildlife HMP development. Vegetation loss, soil disturbance, and stream and arroyo channels would not be disturbed or degraded.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, land ownership adjustments would result in a net loss of 9,140 acres of land under BLM management. The majority of the land designated for disposal would consist of isolated parcels in Grant and northern Luna Counties which are difficult to manage. This land would probably continue to be used as rangeland because of its location and physical characteristics. There would be 66,027 acres designated for disposal in Doña Ana County which would have the potential for residential and commercial development. The land on the East Mesa would be disposed of in two stages; the first land disposal area would be east of the line between townships 2 East and 3 East, the second area would be east of this line. This would have the effect of creating an orderly transfer of land into private ownership and avoid the creation of isolated tracts of public land. There would be an additional 3,840 acres adjacent to the Organ Mountains Coordinated Resource Management Plan which would be managed to provide an open space buffer 1 mile wider at the foot of the Organ Mountains. These provisions would allow local government to adjust to the pace of development and limit development at the foot of the Organ Mountains.

These land ownership changes would cause significant changes in the local property tax base. **BECAUSE OF LAND DISPOSAL** in Doña Ana County, there would be a loss of $49,520 in PILT payments, and an estimated increase of $879,095 in property taxes for a net increase of $829,575 in local tax receipts. The disposal of 92,433 acres in Grant and Luna Counties would result in the loss of $69,325 in PILT payments, and an estimated increase of **$33,800** in local tax receipts for a net reduction of $35,525 in revenues.

There would be 149,320 acres of land acquisition under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**. These lands would consist of parcels in ACECs and WSAs which have significant resource values. These lands are presently either State trust (93,110 acres) or privately-owned (56,210 acres). The transfer of the privately-owned land into public ownership would result in the loss of $20,554 in property tax receipts and an increase of $42,158 in PILT payments for a net increase of $21,603 in revenues. The net effect of **DISPOSAL AND ACQUISITION** transactions on local revenues would be an increase of **$815,663** in revenues to local governments in the Mimbres Resource Area.

These changes in land ownership would have significant social impacts. The patterns of land use and urban growth in Doña Ana County would be influenced by the availability of non-agricultural land with development potential. This would allow urban growth to occur in the Rio Grande Corridor without sacrificing the agricultural land base. Management efficiency of the BLM would be improved by the consolidation of land holdings into rational management units. Significant resource conflicts in ACECs and WSAs would be reduced by the acquisition of inholdings. Landowners would have the opportunity of acquiring title to BLM inholdings.

UNDER THE PROPOSED PLAN, there would be **21** ACEC designations **AND 4 RNAs**. The Gila Middle and Gila Lower Box would be **DESIGNATED** wild and scenic river study areas, and four new areas **WOULD BE DESIGNATED** for wilderness study. These designations would protect areas of significant biological, scenic, and cultural importance. Their value would be to provide opportunities for the study and appreciation of the cultural and natural environment. There would be economic benefits to local communities as a result of increased tourism. These designations would cause some conflict over the use of resources by extractive economic activities. Conflicts over access and use of inholdings would be minimized through land ownership adjustments. There would be possible conflicts regarding the construction of Hooker Dam and it's effect on the wild and scenic river study areas, and with riparian and stream ecology. Consideration of these values would require careful management of stream flow below Hooker Dam. **THERE HAVE BEEN CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY GRAZING PERMITTEES THAT SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS SUCH AS ACECs OR WSAs WILL AFFECT LOAN OR PERMIT VALUES. LENDERS HAVE INDICATED THERE IS NOT SUFFICIENT EMPIRICAL SALES DATA THAT THEY CAN DEFINE AN ACTUAL DOLLAR AMOUNT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RANCHES WITH AND RANCHES WITHOUT THESE DESIGNATIONS. WITHIN THE MARKET, HOWEVER, THERE IS A PERCEPTION THAT THERE WILL BE ADDITIONAL BURDENS TO COMPLY WITH RESOURCE MANAGEMENT-RELATED RESTRICTIONS AND THAT THESE RESTRICTIONS WILL EVENTUALLY RESULT IN REDUCED PERMITTED GRAZING CAPACITY. AS A RESULT, SOME POTENTIAL BUYERS ARE RELUCTANT TO PURCHASE A RANCH WITH THESE PERCEIVED LIMITATIONS. THIS UNCERTAINTY IS CAUSING LENDERS TO BE MORE CONSERVATIVE IN FINANCING RANCHES WITH IDENTIFIED OR PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CONFLICTS OR THAT MAY BE SUBJECT TO ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS IN THE FUTURE (CARRASCO 1992).**

Under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**, vehicle use designations would be much more restrictive than **EXISTS NOW.** These designations would prohibit off-road travel on 99.4 percent of the Resource Area. The network of existing roads and trails would be relied upon to provide access to the vast majority of the area in the Resource Area. Reclamation of unneeded roads or trails would be possible in areas where vehicles use is restricted to designated roads and trails. These designations would cause conflicts with some resource uses, but they would protect soil and vegetation and provide benefit to the Resource Area as a whole.

Access would be obtained for 19 areas under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**. The type of access (whether vehicle or foot) obtained would be determined as outlined in Chapter 2. The primary purpose of obtaining access to public land would be to provide opportunities for recreation, although some permittees would also benefit from these actions. The need for access **COULD CAUSE A POSSIBLE**

CONFLICT WITH LANDOWNERS, as well as additional administrative expense to BLM.

Right-of-way avoidance and exclusion area designations would protect significant areas of wildlife habitat, scenic value, and recreational potential from use as rights-of-way. These designations could increase the costs of locating rights-of-way in some areas.

Areas would be areas withdrawn from locatable mineral entry, closed to mineral materials disposal, and closed to mineral leasing. Site-specific requirements for fluid minerals leasing would be continued on some areas. The remainder of the Resource Area would be open to minerals leasing under standard terms and conditions: oil and gas, 3,532,300 acres and geothermal and nonenergy leasables, 3,499,500 acres. These restrictions would not be expected to cause a great impact on the mineral extraction industries. They would provide protection to the most areas where other significant resource values are found.

TWO NEW SRMAs WOULD BE DESIGNATED under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**. In addition, 5 trails, 4 interpretive areas (for cultural resources), and 2 primitive camping sites would be developed. These would be expected to serve 220,000 to 280,000 visitor use days per year. The BLM would collect $75,000 in fees annually and an estimated $1.8 million to $2 million in gross receipts would be generated annually.

FOUR INTERPRETIVE SITES FOR CULTURAL RESOURCES WOULD BE DESIGNATED UNDER THE PROPOSED PLAN. Three existing cultural management plans would be retained and cultural resources management prescriptions would be developed for 11 ACECs. The major emphasis would be to inventory, preserve and protect sites. The benefits of this policy would be to encourage knowledge and appreciation of the cultural resources found in the Resource Area. Preservation of cultural resources has important social and economic benefits for future generations.

Major emphasis **WOULD BE PLACED** on wildlife habitat improvement under **THE PROPOSED PLAN**. Six new HMPs would be developed for deer, pronghorn and bighorn sheep. Increases in deer populations would lead to an estimated 4 percent increase in hunter days which would contribute an additional $28,492 to local economies.

Eight watershed management plans **WOULD BE PROPOSED** as critical watershed areas. These plans would reduce surface disturbing activities by requiring provisions for erosion control in project proposals. A slight increase in costs to some resource uses **COULD OCCUR,** but the economic effects would not be great. Benefits would be reduced erosion sedimentation, flooding, and increased stream bank stability.

Vegetation sale areas would be continued, **AND** a new area would be opened between Lordsburg and Deming. This would provide the opportunity for the use of native vegetation in desert landscaping, but the economic effects would not be great.

Vegetation treatments for brush control and **RANGELAND IMPROVEMENT WOULD BE CARRIED OUT OVER LARGE PORTIONS OF THE RESOURCE AREA. TREATMENT COSTS WOULD RANGE FROM $9,600 TO $12,800 PER SECTION (640 ACRES).** The annual value of increased livestock and wildlife production from the vegetation treatment is estimated at $1,325 per section. Additional benefits **WOULD** result from increased soil stability and reduced erosion.

UNDER THE PROPOSED PLAN, LIVESTOCK GRAZING WOULD CONTINUE TO BE EXCLUDED IN FOUR AREAS (SCHOLES AND OWL CANYON ALLOTMENTS, PORTIONS OF THE ORGAN MOUNTAINS, AND REDROCK GAME FARM), AND ELIMINATED IN ONE OTHER AREA (THE BEAR CREEK ACEC). This would result in a reduction of approximately 90 AUs, or 0.2 percent of the livestock production in the Resource Area. There would be a loss of $25,632 in gross receipts from livestock and $2,128 in grazing fees. **SINCE ALL BUT ONE AREA IS PRESENTLY EXCLUDED FROM GRAZING, THESE LOSSES WOULD BE INSIGNIFICANT.** An additional 447 AUs would be lost from land exchanges in Doña Ana County. This would result in the loss of $10,031 in grazing fees and $126,948 in gross receipts from livestock annually. Land disposal in Grant and Luna Counties would result in the loss of **6,808 AUs** from public land. The

BLM would lose **$147,053** in grazing fees annually, but there would be no loss in gross receipts as the land-use would be expected to continue as rangeland.

IN SUMMARY, the land ownership adjustments proposed in **THE PROPOSED PLAN** would reduce the total acreage of public land by 9,000 acres. However, there would be **156,000** acres of land disposal and 149,000 acres of land acquisitions. The result of these land ownership changes would be to provide land for growth in the Mesilla Valley, to consolidate BLM holdings, and to acquire inholdings in SMAs. Local governments would gain approximately $935,000 in additional property taxes as a result of these land ownership changes. Increased revenues would be due to a combination of increased PILT payments (from acquisition of State trust and private lands) as well as increased tax revenues as a result of disposal. Patterns of land use and development would be influenced by these land ownership changes.

Recreational development on public land would provide a wider spectrum of recreational activity and an estimated increase of $2 million in gross receipts. Increases in hunting would provide an estimated $28,492 in gross receipts to local economies.

Livestock grazing would be eliminated on 8,026 acres. This would result in the loss of about $150,000 in gross receipts and in $12,000 in grazing fees. Land disposal on isolated tracts would cause a reduction of about $15,000 in grazing fees.

There would be no significant economic effects unique to **THE PROPOSED PLAN** from ACEC designations, vehicle management, access acquisition, right-of-way, wildlife habitat policy, minerals policy, cultural, paleontological resources, and management, or vegetation management.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Approximately 123 acres would be disturbed each year by minerals activities (see Table 4-1), for a total of 2,464 acres over the 20-year life of the Plan. BLM minerals restrictions would be in addition to existing U. S. Forest Service restrictions, which would further restrict minerals activities in the region. Disposal of land near Las Cruces that has moderate to high potential for geothermal resources would preclude leasing and development. Disposal of land near Las Cruces that has high potential for sand and gravel would preclude development. Salable minerals would be easier or harder to develop or obtain because there would be less regulation but the landowner might be unwilling to develop.

Land ownership adjustments would help block up public land and improve manageability. Development of disposal lands on the East Mesa would help prevent development of farmlands in Mesilla Valley. Development of disposal land on the East Mesa would combine with the development of 10,000 acres of State trust land on the East Mesa.

Approximately 745 acres would be disturbed each year by lands activities (see Table 4-1), for a total of 14,900 acres over the 20-year life of the Plan. Right-of-way exclusion and avoidance areas would require longer routes for some right-of-way applicants. Right-of-way restrictions would be in addition to existing U. S. Forest Service restrictions and other restrictions on neighboring public land, which would further restrict the location of rights-of-way in the region.

Access would be improved throughout the Resource Area by the acquisition of State trust and private lands. Access improvement would increase recreation opportunities but may also increase exposure of cultural resources and special status species. Roads such as State or Federal highways may be developed by other agencies, in addition to what is proposed for public land in this Plan.

Vegetation would be protected by land acquisitions, SMA management prescriptions, vehicle use limitations, right-of-way restrictions, minerals closures, HMPs, WSAs, watershed management plans, livestock grazing plans, elimination of livestock grazing, and management of riparian and arroyo habitats. Land disposals, open vehicle use, and recreation development would result in vegetation loss in specific areas. Surface disturbing activities would disturb approximately 1,020 acres of vegetation each year (see Table 4-1), for a total of 20,400 acres over the 20-year life of the Plan. Most surface disturbance would be short-term and localized, and there would be few residual impacts after the areas revegetate. Desired plant community objectives would affect State trust, private, and other non-BLM lands. Land treatments would be beneficial to vegetation on State trust and private lands if done in conjunction with public land.

Soil disturbance and erosion would decrease as a result of SMA management prescriptions, watershed management plans, HMPs, WSAs, vegetation treatments, vehicle use limitations, and closure of areas to minerals activities. Soil disturbance would occur on approximately 1,020 acres each year (see Table 4-1), for a total of 20,400 acres over the 20-year life of the Plan. Most soil disturbance would be short-term and localized, and there would be few residual impacts after the areas revegetate. Airborne dust would be reduced by SMA management prescriptions, watershed management plans, HMPs, WSAs, vehicle use limitations, right-of-way restrictions, and vegetation treatments. Minerals activities, especially sand and gravel development, from a variety of sources on Federal, State trust, and private lands would combine to increase airborne dust. Water resources would benefit from watershed management plans, vegetation treatments, and riparian enhancements, which would protect vegetation, reduce runoff and water erosion, and increase percolation of water into the

CHAPTER 5 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

INTRODUCTION

The Mimbres Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) was prepared by an interdisciplinary team of resource specialists from the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Mimbres Resource Area.

Writing of the RMP/EIS document itself began in 1990; however, preceding the writing phase a complex process of data gathering and other preparatory activities occurred. This process included resource inventory, public participation, interagency coordination, and preparation of a Management Situation Analysis (MSA). The MSA is on file in the Mimbres Resource Area Office as is documentation of the public participation and interagency coordination. Consultation and coordination with agencies, organizations, and individuals occurred in a variety of ways throughout the planning process. A complete mailing list of all those contacted throughout the planning process is also on file in the Mimbres Resource Area Office.

The initial sections of this chapter are devoted to consultation and coordination activities carried out during the preparation of this RMP. Comments and responses will be included in this chapter.

During the planning process, formal and informal efforts have been made to involve the public, other Federal agencies, State, and local governments. Several points of public involvement are mandated with which there has been compliance.

FORMAL CONSULTATION

Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is required prior to initiation of any project by BLM that may affect any Federally listed special status species or its habitat. Consultation is required by Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973. This RMP/EIS is considered a major planning effort, and formal consultation has been **COMPLETED**. Letters of formal consultation are on file in the Mimbres Resource Area Office. **COORDINATION AND CONSULTATION WILL CONTINUE THROUGHOUT THE PLANNING PROCESS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN.**

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) and the New Mexico Natural Resources Department have been contacted in regard to State listed threatened and endangered animal and plant species. This Plan is consistent with legislation protecting State listed species. NMDGF also provided information on existing wildlife population levels and proposed wildlife population goals. Coordination and consultation with the State will be continued throughout the planning process and during implementation of the plan.

The BLM cultural resource management program operates in accordance with 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 800, which provides specific procedures for consultation between the BLM and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) NMSO-168 between the SHPO, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the BLM New Mexico State Office became effective October 19, 1982. This MOU incorporates procedures for exchanging information with the SHPO concerning cultural resources on public and private lands. It defines activities requiring consultation and establishes reporting standards. Similarly, the Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement for the protection of cultural resources under the Federal coal management program establishes procedures and focuses on measures that protect the types of sites usually found on Federal land. The SHPO has been consulted during the development of the RMP.

CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER PLANS

The BLM planning regulations require that RMPs be "consistent with officially approved or adopted resource-related plans, and the policies and procedures contained therein, of other Federal agencies, State and local governments, and Indian tribes, so long as the guidance and RMPs are also consistent with the purposes, policies and programs of Federal laws and regulations applicable to public lands . . ." (43 CFR 1610.3-2). In order to ensure such consistency, finalized plans were solicited from Federal, State, and local agencies as well as Tribal governments listed in Table 5-**2**.

At this time there are no known inconsistencies between any of the alternatives and officially approved and adopted resource-related plans of other Federal agencies, State and local governments, and Indian tribes. **COORDINATION AND CONSULTATION WILL CONTINUE THROUGHOUT THE PLANNING PROCESS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN.**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation in the Mimbres RMP is a dynamic process occurring throughout the development of the Plan and beyond. In addition to formal public participation steps, informal contacts occur frequently with public land users and interested persons through meetings, field trips, telephone calls or letters. All applicable public participation is documented and analyzed in the planning process and kept on file in the Mimbres Resource Area Office.

A notice was published in the Federal Register on September 22, 1988, announcing the formal start of the planning process.

Prior to publishing the Notice of Intent, informal public meetings were held as early as March 1988 and have continued throughout development of the RMP/EIS. Meetings were held with BLM's District Advisory Council, Doña Ana County Associated Sportsmen, Sierra Club, Southern New Mexico Coalition of Conservation Organizations, Native Plant Society, Desert Trophy Hunters, Picacho Gun Club, Fort Bliss Rod and Gun Club, Rio Grande Corridor Committee, BLM Safford District, Range Improvement Task Force, and Hidden Valley Ranch.

A comprehensive public participation plan was prepared, with the intent of involving interested or affected parties early and continuously throughout the planning process. The plan emphasizes localized one-to-one contacts, media coverage, direct mailings and continued coordination with local, State, and other Federal agencies.

Meetings to determine the scope of the RMP and to obtain input on issues and planning criteria were held in Las Cruces (July 26, 1989), Deming (July 18, 1989), Lordsburg (July 19, 1989), and Silver City (July 20, 1989), New Mexico and El Paso, Texas (July 25, 1989). A scoping report which outlined issues and management concerns was issued prior to the meetings in June **1989**. The report also gave the times and locations for the public meetings. A Follow-up Scoping Report was distributed in November 1989. The Report contained revisions to the preliminary issues, management concerns, and planning criteria based upon public review and comment. On June 25, 1990, a letter was sent to over 1,500 individuals on the RMP mailing list to update them on the progress of the RMP.

Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 requires the BLM to coordinate land use planning activities with other Federal agencies, State and local governments and Indian tribes. FLPMA also requires BLM to ensure that consideration is given to non-Bureau plans that are pertinent to the development of the RMP, assist in resolving inconsistencies between Federal and non-Federal government plans and to provide for meaningful public involvement of other Federal agencies, State and local government officials and Indian tribes in the development of the RMP. In line with these requirements, BLM held initial interagency meetings **THROUGHOUT THE MONTH OF JUNE 1989** with over 40 entities of Federal, State and local governments, and Indian tribes. **(SEE TABLE 5-1.)** BLM officials have continued these contacts throughout the process by providing RMP updates at regularly scheduled meetings of the various governmental entities. **SPECIFICALLY,**

TABLE 5-1
MIMBRES RMP INTERAGENCY MEETINGS

AGENCY	DATE
LUNA COUNTY *CITY OF DEMING NM HIGHWAY DEPT.	JUNE 6, 1989
HIDALGO COUNTY *CITY OF LORDSBURG	JUNE 6, 1989
CORONADO NATIONAL FOREST (DOUGLAS RANGER DISTRICT)	JUNE 7, 1989
*GRANT COUNTY	JUNE 8, 1989
GILA NATIONAL FOREST	JUNE 8, 1989
NEW MEXICO DEPT OF GAME AND FISH ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE	JUNE 14, 1989
NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY NASA ("A" MOUNTAIN)	JUNE 14, 1989
DOÑA ANA COUNTY CITY OF LAS CRUCES *TOWN OF HATCH TOWN OF MESILLA *LAS CRUCES PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT GADSDEN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT	JUNE 15, 1989
U.S. BORDER PATROL U.S. CUSTOMS SERVICE	JUNE 15, 1989
NEW MEXICO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT DIVISION	JUNE 20, 1989
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION ELEPHANT BUTTE IRRIGATION DISTRICT INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION DOÑA ANA COUNTY FLOOD COMMISSION	JUNE 20, 1989
FT. BLISS WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE NASA (WHITE SANDS) TEST FACILITY	JUNE 21, 1989
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE STATE LAND OFFICE RANGE IMPROVEMENT TASK FORCE	JUNE 21, 1989
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE NEW MEXICO BUREAU OF MINES NEW MEXICO MINING AND MINERALS DIVISION *NEW MEXICO FORESTRY DIVISION *NEW MEXICO STATE PARKS	JUNE 22, 1989
LOCAL CONGRESSIONAL STAFFS	JUNE 26, 1989

SOURCE: BLM FILES 1989

NOTE: *MEETING SCHEDULED BUT AGENCY DID NOT ATTEND.

THE LUNA AND GRANT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WERE BRIEFED ON THE RMP STATUS PRIOR TO RELEASE OF THE DRAFT RMP/EIS IN 1990.

The Mimbres Resource Area plans to prepare an RMP summary update every year following the published final RMP. The purpose of this update will be to inform the public of the progress made in implementing the RMP. The summary will also describe the activity plans to be prepared the following year so that interested members of the public may request copies and comment on them. The BLM hopes that this will enable the public to become further involved in the specific land management actions resulting from the implementation of this RMP.

PUBLIC REVIEW OF THE RMP

THE DRAFT RMP/EIS WAS FILED WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) ON AUGUST 16, 1991. THE 90-DAY COMMENT PERIOD BEGAN ON AUGUST 23, 1991 AND ENDED NOVEMBER 25, 1991. A NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY WAS PUBLISHED IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER ON AUGUST 20, 1991. DURING THE COMMENT PERIOD, FIVE PUBLIC WORKSHOPS WERE HELD: SEPTEMBER 17 IN DEMING, SEPTEMBER 18 IN LORDSBURG, SEPTEMBER 19 IN SILVER CITY, SEPTEMBER 24 IN EL PASO, TEXAS, AND SEPTEMBER 25 IN LAS CRUCES. BLM STAFF WHO WERE FAMILIAR WITH THE DRAFT RMP/EIS WERE AVAILABLE AT THESE WORKSHOPS TO ANSWER QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS. PUBLIC HEARINGS WERE HELD IN LAS CRUCES, NEW MEXICO (ON OCTOBER 22) AND LORDSBURG, NEW MEXICO (ON OCTOBER 23, 1991) TO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO PRESENT ORAL COMMENTS. THE PUBLIC WAS NOTIFIED ABOUT THE HEARINGS IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER, LOCAL NEWSPAPERS, AND PERSONAL LETTERS AND CONTACTS. PERTINENT PORTIONS OF THE PUBLIC HEARINGS ARE INCLUDED IN THIS CHAPTER. COMPLETE TRANSCRIPTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION AT THE MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA OFFICE.

Table 5-**2** is a partial listing of various Federal, State and local agencies, organizations, Indian Tribes, and individuals to which the **PROPOSED RMP/FINAL EIS** is being sent for review and comment.

Informal coordination with the public has taken place throughout the planning process through personal contacts, telephone calls, and letters, and will continue throughout the remainder of the planning process.

The RMP/EIS was prepared by an interdisciplinary team of resource specialists. Table 5-**3** lists the team members, job titles, and responsibility associated with the RMP.

SUMMARY OF SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

BECAUSE OF CONCERNS RAISED DURING THE REVIEW OF THE DRAFT, AFTER THE FORMAL COMMENT PERIOD ENDED, BLM HELD NEARLY 20 SEPARATE MEETINGS WITH GRAZING PERMITTEES, UTILITY COMPANY REPRESENTATIVES, COUNTY OFFICIALS, AND OTHERS (INCLUDING LOCAL ENVIRONMENTALISTS AND THE BOOTHEEL SPORTSMEN'S ASSOCIATION). A TOTAL OF ABOUT 200 PEOPLE ATTENDED THESE MEETINGS. THE AVERAGE SIZE OF THESE MEETINGS WAS 13 PEOPLE, RANGING FROM ONE PERSON TO 25 PEOPLE. IN ADDITION, BLM ATTENDED A "TOWN MEETING" IN RODEO, NEW MEXICO IN EARLY JANUARY WITH ABOUT 200 PEOPLE. MOST OF THE SMALL GROUP MEETINGS FOLLOWED THAT MEETING. BLM FEELS THAT THE SMALL GROUP MEETINGS WERE VERY WORTHWHILE. THE MEETINGS WERE A GOOD MEANS OF CLARIFYING THE CONTENT OF THE RMP AND RESOLVING SPECIFIC CONCERNS. BLM FEELS THAT IT CAN BUILD ON THESE MEETINGS AND WORK TOWARD ESTABLISHING A POSITIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIP.

RECORD OF DECISION

THE MIMBRES RMP WILL BE APPROVED NO EARLIER THAN 30 DAYS AFTER

TABLE 5-2
PARTIAL LISTING OF DOCUMENT RECIPIENTS

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- Department of Agriculture
  - Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service
  - Animal Plant Health Inspection Service
  - Farmers' Home Administration
  - Soil Conservation Service
  - U.S. Forest Service
    - Southwest Regional Office
    - Gila National Forest
    - Coronado National Forest
- Department of the Army
  - Corps of Engineers
  - Fort Bliss
  - White Sands Missile Range
- Department of Commerce
- Department of the Interior
  - Bureau of Indian Affairs
  - Bureau of Mines
  - Bureau of Reclamation
  - National Park Service
  - Office of Surface Mining
  - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
  - U.S. Geological Society
- Department of Energy
  - Office of Environmental Compliance
- U.S. Border Patrol
- NASA
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Department of Transportation
  - Federal Highway Administration
- Congressional Staff
- International Boundary and Water Commission

STATE GOVERNMENT

- Arizona Game and Fish Department
- Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources
- Department of Finance and Administration
- Range Improvement Task Force
- Historic Preservation Division
  - State Historic Preservation Officer
- Energy and Minerals Department
- Governor of New Mexico
- Governor of Texas
- Health and Environmental Department
  - Environmental Improvement Division
- State Land Office
- Natural Resources Department
- New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
- Division of State Forestry
- State Highway Department
- Congressional Delegation
- Museum of New Mexico
- Soil and Water Conservation Division
- New Mexico State University
- New Mexico State Police
- New Mexico Army National Guard
- New Mexico Department of Agriculture
- New Mexico Department of Commerce and Industry
- State Engineer
  - Interstate Stream Commission
- New Mexico State Livestock Board
- State Oil Conservation
- New Mexico Mining Association

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

- Mayors
  - Towns of:
    - Mesilla
    - Hatch
  - Cities of:
    - Anthony
    - Bayard
    - Central
    - Deming
    - El Paso
    - Hurley
    - Las Cruces
    - Lordsburg
    - Mesilla
    - Silver City
- County Commissioners:
  - Grant
  - Doña Ana
  - Luna
  - Hidalgo
- El Paso Public Service Board
- Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments - Silver City
- Coalition of Arizona/New Mexico Counties
- Elephant Butte Irrigation District
- Las Cruces Extra-Territorial Zone Commission
- New Mexico Border Commission
- New Mexico Association of Counties
- West Texas Council of Governments

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

- Continental Divide Trail Society
- New Mexico Cattle Growers Association
- Albuquerque Archaeological Society
- Museum of Natural History
- Earth First!
- Natural Resources Defense Council
- Central New Mexico Audubon Society
- National Audubon Society
- New Mexico Oil and Gas Association
- New Mexico Wildlife Federation
- Sierra Club
- The Nature Conservancy
- Society for Range Management
- Native Plant Society
- Independent Petroleum Association of New Mexico
- Farm and Livestock Bureau
- Public Land Council
- The Wilderness Society
- New Mexico Bureau of Land Management Wilderness Coalition
- Grazing Permittees
- New Mexico Environmental Law Center
- New Mexico Natural History Institute
- American Rivers
- Minerals Exploration Coalition
  - Land Use Planning Committee

TRIBAL GOVERNMENT

- Ysleta del Sur
- Mescalero
- Pueblo of Acoma
- Pueblo of Isleta
- San Carlos Apache Tribe
- White Mountain Apache Tribe
- Zuni Tribe

Source: BLM Mailing List, 1991.

TABLE 5-3
LIST OF PREPARERS

DOCUMENT PRODUCTION

Carol Alba, Computer Specialist, System Administrator/GIS User Support

James Christensen, Range Conservationist, ADS Data Entry

Linda Cole, ADS Data Entry/MOSS Analysis

Christine Commarato, Planning Clerk

Roberta Cordova, Cartographic Technician

Russ Davenport, ADS Data Entry/ MOSS Analysis

Henry Diaz, Cartographer

Luis Garcia, Cartographic Technician

Rena Gutierrez, Writer-Editor, Document Production Specialist

Ron Hernandez, ADS Data Entry

Laird McIntosh, GIS Coordinator

Jim Peterson, Cartographer

Bernida Sanderson, Editorial Assistant, Word Processor

Brian Samuelson, Cartograhic Technician

CORE TEAM

Scott Florence, Team Leader Multi-Resource Branch Chief

Dallas Bash, Social-Economist (Social & Economic Conditions)

Tom Custer, Geologist (Minerals)

Mark Hakkila, Natural Resource Specialist (Access; Recreation; Visual Resources; Wilderness)

Bill Merhege, Wildlife Management Biologist (Soil, Air, Water; Wildlife; Riparian; Special Status Species Animals)

Mike Mallouf, Archaeologist (Cultural Resources)

Shirley Miller, Realty Specialist (Lands and Minerals)

Bea Wade, Range Conservationist (Livestock Grazing, Vegetation, Special Status Species Plants)

NATURAL RESOURCES TECHNICAL TEAM

Bill Gilbert, Technical Coordinator

Charles Hodgin, Planning Coordinator

DISTRICT REVIEW TEAM

Tim Salt, Area Manager, Mimbres Resource Area
Rex Alford, Fire Management Specialist
Bruce Call, Soil Scientist
Ken Holmes, Wildlife Management Biologist
Jim McCormick, Range Specialist
Juan Padilla, Realty Specialist
Dwayne Sykes, Outdoor Recreation Planner
Chuck O'Donnell, Geologist
Pam Smith, Archaeologist
Richard Watts, ADM, Operations

BLM STATE REVIEW TEAM

Phil Beck, Realty Specialist
Mark Blakeslee, Hazardous Materials Coordinator
Tim Burke, Range Conservationist
Bill Dalness, Geologist
Andy Dimas, Wildlife Management Biologist
Clarence Hougland, Supervisory Realty Specialist
Lou Ann Jacobson-Ball, Archaeologist
Steve Jordan, Civil Engineer
Jan Knight, Botanist
Kirk Koch, Hydrologist
Barbara Masinton, Natural Resource Specialist
Dave Mensing, Outdoor Recreation Planner
Jim Olsen, Geologist
Bill Overbaugh, Outdoor Recreation Planner
Ted Rael, Realty Specialist
Dave Schafersman, Hazardous Materials Coordinator
John Selkirk, Fire and Aviation Specialist
Joseph I. Torrez, Geologist
J. W. Whitney, Natural Resource Specialist

PUBLICATION BY THE EPA OF THE NOTICE OF RECEIPT OF THE PROPOSED RMP AND FINAL EIS IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER. APPROVAL OF THE PLAN WILL BE DOCUMENTED IN A RECORD OF DECISION WHICH WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC REVIEW. APPROVAL WILL BE WITHHELD ON ANY PORTION OF THE PLAN PROTESTED UNTIL FINAL ACTION HAS BEEN COMPLETED ON THE PROTESTS.

PROTEST PROCESS

ANY PERSON WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE PLANNING PROCESS AND HAS AN INTEREST THAT IS OR MAY BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED RMP MAY FILE A WRITTEN PROTEST WITH THE DIRECTOR OF THE BLM WITHIN 30 DAYS OF THE DATE THE EPA PUBLISHES THE NOTICE OF RECEIPT OF THE PROPOSED RMP AND FINAL EIS IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER.

THE PROTEST MUST CONTAIN THE NAME, MAILING ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER, AND INTEREST OF THE PERSON FILING THE PROTEST; A STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES BEING PROTESTED, RAISING ONLY THOSE ISSUES THAT WERE SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD DURING THE PLANNING PROCESS; A STATEMENT OF THE PARTS OF THE PLAN BEING PROTESTED; COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS ADDRESSING THE ISSUES SUBMITTED DURING THE PLANNING PROCESS BY THE PROTESTING PARTY, OR AN INDICATION OF THE DATE THE ISSUES WERE DISCUSSED FOR THE RECORD; AND A CONCISE STATEMENT EXPLAINING WHY THE STATE DIRECTOR'S DECISION IS BELIEVED TO BE WRONG. ANY PROTESTS MUST BE SENT TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE BLM AT THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:

DIRECTOR (760)
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
ROOM 407
1620 L STREET NW
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006

THE DIRECTOR WILL RENDER A PROMPT WRITTEN DECISION ON THE PROTEST, SETTING FORTH THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION. THE DECISION WILL BE SENT TO THE PROTESTING PARTY BY CERTIFIED MAIL AND WILL BE THE FINAL DECISION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.

COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

THERE WERE A TOTAL OF 226 WRITTEN AND 6 ORAL COMMENTS SUBMITTED DURING THE FORMAL COMMENT PERIOD. TABLE 5-4 LISTS ORAL AND COMMENT LETTERS RECEIVED. ALL LETTERS ARE REPRODUCED IN THEIR ENTIRETY. OF THE TOTAL, 60 PERCENT OF THE COMMENTS FAVORED ALTERNATIVE A (PRESENT MANAGEMENT), 10 PERCENT FAVORED ALTERNATIVE B (PRESERVATION), 1 PERCENT FAVORED ALTERNATIVE C (PRODUCTION), 4 PERCENT FAVORED ALTERNATIVE D (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE), 3 PERCENT DID NOT FAVOR ANY OF THE ALTERNATIVES, AND 22 PERCENT DID NOT EXPRESS AN OPINION ON A PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (MOST OF THESE COMMENTS WERE SPECIFIC TO CERTAIN GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS OR SUBJECT MATTER OR VERY GENERAL IN NATURE).

RESPONSES HAVE BEEN MADE TO ALL SUBSTANTIVE COMMENTS PRESENTED IN LETTERS. SUBSTANTIVE COMMENTS WERE CONSIDERED TO BE THOSE WHICH ADDRESSED EITHER THE ADEQUACY AND ACCURACY OF THE DRAFT RMP/EIS OR THE MERITS OF THE ALTERNATIVES OR BOTH. THE RESPONSES ARE PRESENTED ADJACENT TO THE COMMENTS IN EACH LETTER. ANY ADDITIONAL LETTERS RECEIVED WILL RECEIVE FULL CONSIDERATION IN THE FINAL DECISION.

TABLE 5-4
ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMENTS RECEIVED

	Assigned Number in Order of Receipt	Name of Commenter
	LC1	John Sproul, Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition
	LC2	Leedrue Hyatt
	LC3	Betty Hyatt
+		Joe Burgess, Hidalgo County Commissioner
+		Ms. Willi Reynolds
	LO3	Thomas Shelley, Phelps Dodge
	1	T. J. Schmierer
+	2	Raymond Bruntmyer, Reg. Compliance Office, Dept. of Air Force
+	3	Walter Mirczak
	4	International Boundary and Water Commission
	5	Richard B. Grabowski, USDI, Bureau of Mines, Intermountain Field Operations Center
	6	Harry N. Bailey
	7	D. P. Milovich, VP NM Operations, Phelps Dodge Mining Co.
+	8	Tom McKenna
+	9	Sam R. Moseley, Regional Admin., Reg. Housing Commissioner, U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development
	10	Joseph Gendron
+	11	Peggy and Douglas Bogart
	12	Ron Flemke
	13	Stephen Capra
	14	Marianne H. Thaeler, President, Friends of Organ Mountains
	15	Brian Wood
	16	Robert E. Layton, Jr., PE, Regional Admin., U.S. EPA, Region 6
	17	Gary Jeffreys
	18	Zeno Wicks, Jr.
	19	J. W. Hartshorne, President, New Mexico Land Use Alliance
	20	Ross May
+	21	R. T. Reynolds
+	22	Frank Chaires, Chairman, Hidalgo Board of Commissioners
*	23	Oma McCants
*	24	Johnnie Dunagan
	25	James R. Wolf, Director, Continental Divide Trail Society
*	26	Gary Corbell
*	27	Edna G. Cleveland
+	28	Richard Faulkner, DUY Ranch
	29	William W. Dunmire, Public Land Coordinator, The Nature Conservancy
+	30	Charles K. Maxey
	31	Tim W. Hood
	32	Jim Winder
+	33	Amy Kipp, Kipp Cattle Co.
+	34	Justin Kipp, Kipp Cattle Co.
+	35	Rex Kipp, Kipp Cattle Co.
*	36	W. E. Goodbrake
*	37	V. A. Hill/John V. Davis
*	38	Leon McDaniel
	39	Janaloo Hill Hough and Manny Hough, Shakespeare Ranch
	40	Charles McClure
	41	Gerald A. Strauss
+	42	Pecos and Darr Shannon
+	43	Richard Searle
*	44	Albert M. and Naomi M. Brown
*	45	Harry D. Kling
	46	John Sproul, President, Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition
*	47	Dan Puckett
	48	James F. Devine, U.S. Geological Survey
	49	Robert Tafanelli
	50	Jim Carrico, Trans-Pecos Planning and Dev. Coord.
	51	David McCauley, Grant Soil and Water Conservation District
	52	Patricia K. Williams
	53	Stephen Capra
	54	Murray and Judy Keeler
	55	Leedrue Hyatt
	56 (A)	Ms. Storm M. Sermay
	56 (B)	Perry Plummer
+	57	Thomas H. Wootten, Conservation Chairman, The Native Plant Society of New Mexico, Las Cruces Chapter
	58	Jimmy Knight, President, Bootheel Sportsman Association
	59	W. Lance Williams
+	60	James R. Abbott, Forest Supervisor, Coronado National Forest
	61	Thomas H. and Eleanor G. Wootten
	62	Olon Plunk, Manager, Environmental Affairs, Southwestern Public Service Company
*	63	Trudy Thompson
*	64	Lindsey and Leona Riggs
*	65	Constance M. Doshas
*	66	Louise Hogget
*	67	Lee Baker
*	68	Joe Rouse, Rouse Cattle Co.
	69	Frank A. DuBois, Dir./Sec., NM Dept. of Agriculture, Office of Dir./Sec.
	70	E. James Lunt
	71	Bar V Five Ranch
	72	Jim Graham
	73	D.P. Milovich, Phelps Dodge Mining Co.
	74	Ben Zerbey, Chairman, Southern New Mexico Group, Sierra Club
+	75	Bill Cavaliere
+	76	M. Edward Nesselroad/Patricia K. Danser
+	77	James R. Walter

TABLE 5-4 (CONTINUED)
ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMENTS RECEIVED

	Assigned Number in Order of Receipt	Name of Commenter
+	78	Ida Walter
	79	Kevin Bixby
+	80	Duane Coleman, Rafter JL Ranch
+	81	Karen Fuller
+	82	Don R. Kerr
	83	Michael Sauber
+	84	Gladys Croom
+	85	Robert L. Evans/Patricia A. Evans
+	86	James V. McCarty
	87	William C. Miller, Jr./Carrol A. Miller
	88	William C. Miller, Sr./Adeline Miller, Post Office Canyon Ranch
+	89	J. B. Strickland
	90	Clinton E. Dunagan/ Frances Gail Dunagan
	91	Jay Peterson/Kelly Peterson
	92	Jim Evans
	93	Henry Washburn
+	94	Sheila Massey, President, NM Women Involved in Farm Economics (WIFE)
+	95	Tawna and Rusty Evans
+	96	Lenora D. Rand
+	97	Ladd and Barbara Pendleton, Pendleton Ranch and Realty
+	98	Levi Klump
+	99	Mary E. Butler
	100	John V. Brownfield, Goodsight, Inc.
	101	Myra Mahan
+	102	Sam Pursley
	103	Mrs. William R. Cowan
+	104	Darr Shannon, Hidalgo County Cattlegrowers Association
*	105	Buster Green
	106	Jim Culberson, Culberson Ranches, Inc.
	107	Stephen O. MacDonald, Friends of the Gila River
+	108	Anabell Hall
	109	Geoffrey Babb, Preserve Mgr., Gray Ranch
	110	Roger S. Peterson, Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club
	111	Joe Bill Nunn
	112	Thomas D. Lustig, Staff Attorney, National Wildlife Federation
	113	Catherine I. Sandell, Vice President, Mesilla Valley Audubon Society
+	114	Ron Cheghe
+	115	Mr. and Mrs. Ernie Fralie
+	116	Adair Merrell, M & M Hog Farm, Inc.
+	117	Lois B. Kent/Page H. Kent
+	118	Edward Elbrock
	119	Jessie Evans
	120	Henry J. Torkelson
+	121	David and Billie Dunagan, Dunagan Land and Cattle Co.
	122	Will Swift
	123	Mary W. Winkler
	124	Edward Roos IV
+	125	Velva W. Hurt
+	126	James W. Hurt
+	127	Lawrence B. Hurt
+	128	Ernest F. Hurt
+	129	William Hurt
	130	Mrs. Robert Cosimati
+	131	Avery T. Hurt
+	132	Kelly S. Hurt
+	133	Mrs. Annabel Richards
+	134	Dan and Shirley Fralie
+	135	Carol Evans
+	136	Tamara G. Hurt
+	137	Smokey Nunn
+	138	Luther Klump
+	139	John Looker
	140	Addoline Hill
	141	Donald H. Couchman
+	142	Terrell W. Davis
+	143	Bradley Mumford
	144	Theodore B. Hodoba, Native Plant Society of New Mexico
+	145	Dr. and Mrs. Dwayne Morris
+	146	Joe Croom
+	147	Mrs. Don R. Kerr
+	148	Bessie Estes
	149	Larry T. Caudill, Wildlife Legislative Council
+	150	Jim Piatt, Chief, Surface Water Quality Bureau, Environment Department
	151	Kelly Cranston
*	152	Don Plasters
*	153	Aylmer Ruebush
*	154	Olney
*	155	Genevieve Gunter
*	156	Anton J. Kovar
*	157	W. H. Walter
*	158	Tricia Swift
*	159	Pearl Robb Swift/William Swift/ William Swift
*	160	Bob Hughes
*	161	Barbara Hoggett
*	162	A. A. Villegas
*	163	James L. Mitchell
*	164	Eva D. DeBrad

TABLE 5-4 (CONTINUED)
ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMENTS RECEIVED

Assigned Number in Order of Receipt	Name of Commenter
* 165	Jane E. Mitchell
* 166	James Mitchell, Jr.
* 167	Virginia Holguin
* 168	Mrs. Sid Savage
* 169	Merrianne Treadwell
* 170	Lou Spurkin
* 171	Elaine Roybal
* 172	Mary Ann Barnes
* 173	Gabriel Rodriguez
* 174	Guy Johannes III
* 175	Kenny Taylor
* 176	Velma Washburn
* 177	David C. Harrison, Jr.
* 178	Billie R. Estrada
* 179	Linda K. McCarty
* 180	Elaine Byrd
* 181	William K. Meloy, Jr.
* 182	D. R. Acosta
* 183	Timmy Ray ______________
* 184	Dale Betts
* 185	Tommy Richardson
* 186	Russell B. Richins
* 187	Don R. Burk
* 188	Terry E. Burke
* 189	Carlos R. Carabeo
* 190	Oscar Barrio
* 191	Benny Nunez
* 192	Peter W. Schultz
* 193	B. N. Hogan
* 194	A. K. McCarty
* 195	A. P. Sanchez, Jr.
* 196	R. L. Fredrickson
* 197	E. Gonzales, Jr.
* 198	Levi N. Grelli
* 199	Alfonso Gonzales
* 200	Linda Looker
* 201	D. C. Stanford
* 202	Gary L. Drybread
* 203	Valente Verdugo
* 204	Reynoldo Verdugo
* 205	Joe C. Arambule
** 206	
** 207	
* 208	G. Anthony Mason
** 209	
* 210	Pete Carillo
* 211	James M. Sortomme, Jr.
* 212	Jeffrey D. Ahlers
** 213	
** 214	
** 215	
** 216	
** 217	
** 218	
* 219	Augustine Arilucca
** 220	
** 221	

TABLE 5-4 (CONCLUDED)
ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMENTS RECEIVED

Assigned Number in Order of Receipt	Name of Commenter
222	Assoc. Reg. Dir., Resources Mgmt., SW Region, National Park Service
223	Judith M. Espinosa, Secretary, Environment Department
224	Regional Director, Region 2, USDI, Fish and Wildlife Service
225	Thomas E. Petri, Member of Congress
226	Bill Montoya, Director, Department of Game and Fish, State of New Mexico

NOTES: +No response required.
*Signature on Paid Advertisement. No response required. See Comment No. 23 on page 5-73.
**Signature on Paid Advertisement, but unable to read signature. No response required. See Comment No. 23 on page 5-73.

GENERAL RESPONSE 1 - PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE RMP

Many reviewers preferred no change in management from the present situation, favoring Alternative A over other alternatives. BLM has been directed by Congress in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 to prepare land use plans for public land (Section 202). There are currently several existing plans and plan amendments that provide management direction for public land in the Mimbres Resource Area. The problem with these plans is that they do not cover the entire Resource Area, except for grazing and energy mineral related issues, they are out-of-date (one plan dates to 1976), and they are not consistent with existing laws and policies. The public has expressed the need to resolve other issues such as control of off-road vehicles. In 1987, a decision was made to prepare a single, comprehensive plan for the public land in the Resource Area.

The BLM's planning process is "issue driven." Issues and management concerns (or problems) are identified by management and the public to be resolved through the development of the Resource Management Plan (RMP). BLM's basic mandate is found in Section 102 of FLPMA. It is the policy of the United States that public land be managed on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield, in a manner that protects environmental values and recognizes the need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber. The land use plan then becomes the means for making land use allocations to ensure that these needs are accomplished within the Resource Area.

In 1989, after several years of collecting resource inventory data and establishing a data base, the BLM began a process of "scoping" to identify issues, management concerns, and planning criteria that would establish the basic framework for the RMP. In the beginning, this was an internal process, based upon management needs and the collective knowledge of the resource specialists on the planning team. This was then presented to local governments, as well as State and other Federal agencies, in a series of meetings held in June 1989. Following these meetings, this information was presented to the public in the form of a Scoping Report and at five public meetings which were held in July 1989. Following these meetings, the planning team modified the Scoping Report based upon public comment. A follow-up Scoping Report was issued in November 1989. This report formed Chapter 1 of the RMP and set the stage for development of alternatives to resolve the various issues and concerns.

The planning team then developed a range of alternatives, including the "no action" or present management alternative. The No Action Alternative is required by law to be included because it is the basis for comparison with the other alternatives in analyzing the environmental impacts in Chapter 4. It does not, however, fully resolve the issues or management concerns (for example, most of the Resource Area is currently undesignated or defacto "open" to off-road vehicles) or comply with FLPMA. If the No Action Alternative did fully respond to the issues and concerns, there would have been no need to prepare a new plan. The other alternatives represent a reasonable range of possible land use plans that would resolve the issues and concerns in different ways. The Proposed Plan (the Preferred Alternative in the Draft RMP/EIS) attempts to resolve the issues and concerns in a manner that balances the allocation of land and resource uses throughout the Resource Area.

GENERAL RESPONSE 2 - AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN (ACECs)

In Section 202 of FLPMA, Congress directed BLM to give priority to the designation and protection of ACECs in the development and revision of land use plans. ACECs are areas within the public land where special management attention is required to protect and prevent irreparable damage to historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources, or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards. Many reviewers have confused ACECs with wilderness or wilderness study areas (WSAs). While the proposed ACEC boundaries do overlap in some cases with WSA boundaries, the ACECs are usually smaller and have been proposed for reasons stated above, not to protect wilderness values. Each ACEC would be managed in accordance with the management prescriptions for the area. Each area is unique; therefore, management would not be the same for each area.

Many reviewers also objected to the use of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to provide inventory information on potential biological ACECs. Section 201 of FLPMA directs BLM to prepare and maintain inventories of public land resources, giving priority to ACECs. TNC provided this biological inventory information to the BLM under a "challenge cost-share agreement," where matching funds were provided by both BLM and TNC. The agreement specified areas for their consideration as potential ACECs and the criteria to be addressed. The subsequent report contained a thorough review of existing literature and data bases, as well as personal interviews with biologists from local and regional academic institutions and management agencies. We did not anticipate the level of controversy surrounding the report when the cost-share agreement was negotiated with TNC in 1988. We are sensitive to the appearance of a conflict of interest, but we believe that all contracted services were performed in a professional manner. Even so, all future surveys of this type will be scrutinized closely to determine whether or not they should be awarded competitively.

In addition to the challenge cost-share agreement with TNC, BLM developed a similar agreement with New Mexico State University (NMSU) to provide an overview of existing literature and data bases pertaining to cultural resources to the planning area. Part of this agreement also called for providing recommendations for cultural ACECs. The BLM also contracted with NMSU for a social and economic profile of the Resource Area and a social and economic analysis of the alternatives.

In all cases, the BLM planning team reviewed and made final determinations on the recommendations of the cost-share agreements and contracts. In many cases, the team modified these recommendations (including recommended boundaries) based on additional information not known at the time of the reports.

In response to public comment, BLM evaluated areas where there were overlapping special designations such as proposed ACEC boundaries which were virtually identical to WSA boundaries. In these areas, the proposed ACEC designations were scaled back to encompass only the most significant area of biological, scenic, cultural, or other concerns. In several areas, where there is a need to acquire scientific information on the biology of these areas, a designation of RNA is more appropriate than ACEC. One area, Box Canyon, is not proposed for ACEC designation because, based on information not known when the draft was being prepared and after further evaluation, it does not clearly meet the criteria for relevance and importance. Based on this new evaluation, Alternative C (not proposed as an ACEC) became a part of our Proposed Plan. Two other areas, Aden Lava Flow and Kilbourne Hole, have adequate existing designations as a WSA/RNA and National Natural Landmark (respectively).

GENERAL RESPONSE 3 - VEHICLE MANAGEMENT

During the scoping period and even earlier, one of the major public concerns expressed was the lack of control over off-road vehicles and the real or potential resource conflicts that were occurring in the planning area. Under the Proposed Plan, vehicle use would be limited to existing roads and trails throughout most of the Resource Area. Only in ACECs and other Special Management Areas (such as WSAs, the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, and the Border Zone), would vehicle use be more restricted (limited to designated roads and trails or closed). Areas limited to designated roads and trails or closed to vehicle use would be about 650,000 acres, or 22 percent of the Resource Area. As pointed out earlier, much of the Resource Area is currently undesignated. This is a defacto "open" designation, which means that vehicles can be driven anywhere without restriction. The purpose of vehicle designations is to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of public land. Executive Order 11644 also requires that all public land be designated as "open," "limited," or "closed."

GENERAL RESPONSE 4 - LAND ACQUISITION

Many reviewers expressed concern over the acquisition of State trust and private lands in or adjacent to ACECs and other special management areas. Many also expressed concern over condemnation of their land for this purpose. For the record, let it be clearly stated that no land will be condemned for acquisition of State trust and private lands in or adjacent to ACECs and other special management areas. BLM does not have the authority to condemn land for acquisition. All land acquisition in ACECs or special management areas will involve a willing landowner. If the landowner is not willing to sell or exchange his/her land, the BLM will not and cannot condemn for the land. Exchange is our preferred method for acquiring non-Federal land.

Many reviewers also expressed concern over increased Federal ownership in the area. Under the Proposed Plan, there would be a net decrease of about 9,000 acres of public land as a result of land ownership adjustments. Lands identified for disposal would be used to exchange for lands of higher resource value within special management areas.

GENERAL RESPONSE 5 - COORDINATION WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Section 202 of FLPMA also directs the BLM to coordinate the planning and management of public land with the land use planning of local governments, to the extent consistent with the laws governing the administration of the public land. Furthermore, the BLM will, to the extent practical, give consideration to local land use plans, assist in resolving inconsistencies between Federal and local plans, and provide for meaningful public involvement of local officials.

To that end, BLM scheduled a series of meetings with local officials of the four counties and major cities in the planning area prior to the general public scoping meetings. These meetings were held in June 1989. The purpose of the meetings was to obtain early input from local officials on the draft issues, management concerns and planning criteria that would establish the scope and framework of the RMP. In addition, BLM attended Commission meetings in Luna and Grant Counties to brief Commissioners prior to release of the Draft Plan. BLM has recently been working with Luna and Hidalgo County Commissioners in an effort to resolve apparent conflicts between local plans and the RMP. We look forward to a continued close working relationship with all counties in the Resource Area, as the planning process is continued and the plan is implemented.

A complete summary of BLM consultation and coordination efforts for this RMP/EIS is contained in Chapter 5.

LC1

Public Hearing - Las Cruces 10/22/91
John Sproul, Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition

In general, our organization believes Alternative B, the resource protection alternative, provides the best guidance for future management of BLM lands in the resource area. With respect to the Franklins, we're pleased that Alternative D, the preferred alternative, is in many ways similar to Alternative B. We support establishment of an Organ-Franklin Mountain ACEC. We support withdrawal of the ACEC from a variety of mining activities.

We support addition of 640 acres of sand prickly pear habitat in the protected corridor between the Organ and Franklin Mountains. One area where we think the preferred alternative can be improved with respect to the Franklins is in retention of lands in BLM ownership.

LC1-1 Right now, all of the lands, all of the BLM lands adjacent to the proposed ACEC on the east side of the Franklins are identified as suitable for disposal. We believe there are at least 2,310 acres in that area that should be retained in BLM ownership. Retention of these lands would provide the Franklins a greater buffer against future development. It would add to the topographic and biological diversity in the retained BLM lands. It would protect potential habitats for sensitive plants, and it would provide for a better match between the retained BLM lands in New Mexico and the eastern boundary of Franklin Mountains State Park in Texas.

LC1-1 We consider the eastern boundary of the proposed Organ/Franklin Mountain ACEC sufficient to protect the relevant and important values of the proposed ACEC, with minor revision.

We will retain the public land in the north half of Section 31 (359 acres) because it is adjacent to the Franklin Mountains State Park. If we acquire the adjacent private land to the west (Section 36), we would do a plan amendment to add these parcels to the ACEC.

Public Hearing - Las Cruces 10/22/91
Leedrue Hyatt

LC2

stop, but it will greatly encumber construction of untilities, pipelines, power lines, roads and other utilities because of right-of-way avoidance language. And thereby stifling commercial development within the area.

Concerning the Cook's Range ACEC, all the provisions again here are for historical wildlife and recreational values. No provisions that I see have been made for mineral or grazing values.

LC2-1 One specific problem that gives me trouble is the one mile of fence proposed to protect riparian areas. At the seminar in Deming I asked several people where this mile of fence would be and what riparian areas it would protect, and nobody could answer my question.

I think this kind of vagueness, I think this needs to be nailed down a little closer. We need to know where the fence will be and why it will be.

I'd like to--attack is not a good word, but I'd like to defend myself against this. But I don't know where or how to defend against it because of the vagueness of the statement.

LC2-2 Another one of the main flaws I see with it is the Hoover Valley ACEC, which is there to protect an outstanding stand of black grama grass. This black grama grass has been established and flourished under current grazing practices. And the only thing I can see about that is if it ain't broke, don't fix it. Let it continue to grow as it is. I know this is probably not practical, but I'd

LC2-1 The 1 mile of fence refers to the possible construction of exclosures (1 to 10 acres) around riparian spring areas on public land within the proposed ACEC. The 1 mile of fence is an estimate of the amount of fencing required to construct the exclosures. This is not a proposal to construct a single linear mile of fence. If a spring has been used as a livestock water, provisions will be made to provide water for livestock. Potential sites for riparian exclosures are Frying Pan Spring, Riley Spring, portions of Puma Spring which may occur on public land, and any other seeps and springs which occur on public land.

Based on our field meeting with you, we have also incorporated wording that requires consultation and coordination with the permittee and also addresses other methods of protecting riparian areas such as relocation of existing water troughs.

LC2-2 The proposed ACEC designation does not mean that there is anything wrong with past or present management of this area by the grazing permittees. On the contrary, the ACEC designation presents an opportunity to showcase good management practices to the general public. We agree that careful stewardship of the area by the permittees has resulted in the present condition of the area. We have revised the management prescription and description of the ACEC in Appendix H to reflect this. This is one of the largest pure stands of black grama in the Mimbres Resource Area and represents a near classic climax community according to the Soil Conservation Service description for the gravelly or gravelly loam range site.

Public Hearing - Las Cruces 10/22/91
Betty Hyatt

LC3

Brownfield. The Hyatts, the Brownfields have ranched for five generations on Cook's Peak. I think that Mr. Brownfield and my husband have received awards from the Soil Conversation Committee and all kinds of awards for their care of the ground.

I feel like some of these people don't understand, and from the articles in some of the publications, that the ranchers do care for and take care of the land. And I think things like the ACEC need to consider that and give that some kind of weight when they form their plans. And when they take comments from all over the nation, I think if they would redo their formula to accept comments, that it would greatly benefit those that take care of the land.

LC3-1

And one other thing about the Fort Cummings ACEC that was in this Draft, I think we would appreciate it if in all publications and in inquiries and news bulletins about Fort Cummings, that it be stated that Fort Cummings is privately held. In the ACEC it states that the entire wall, the fort was encircled by this ten-foot wall all around the fort, and I think people are misunderstanding and think it is owned by the Bureau of Land Management or is public, and it is owned. My father-in-law purchased it years ago. Thank you.

MR. SCHNITKER: Thank you, Mrs. Hyatt. One last call.

Okay, then this hearing is closed. Thank you.
(Meeting closed at 7:25 p.m.)

SOUTHWESTERN COURT REPORTERS, INC.
LAS CRUCES, NEW MEXICO 525-2002

LC3-1 Although much of the early period fort is on privately-owned land, other structures associated with the Army post are on public land managed by the BLM. Cultural resources are concentrated within an approximately 200-acre parcel of land. Approximately 40 acres are privately-owned. This has been noted in the text for the Cooke's Range ACEC (which includes the public land portion of Fort Cummings) in Appendix H.

LC1

FRANKLIN
MOUNTAINS
WILDERNESS
COALITION

Statement
of the
Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition
on the
DRAFT MIMBRES RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN
AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Presented by John Sproul
to the
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT,
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA
October 22, 1991

In general, our organization believes Alternative B provides the best guidance for future management of BLM lands in the Mimbres Resource Area, including the New Mexico portion of the Franklin Mountains. With regard to the Franklins, we are pleased the Preferred Alternative (Alternative D) is in many respects similar to Alternative B. We support the establishment of an Organ/Franklin Mountains ACEC; the addition of 640 acres of habitat for sand-pricklypear to the corridor between the Organs and the Franklins; and the withdrawal of the ACEC from locatable mineral entry, fluid mineral leasing, mineral material sales and mineral material disposal.

LC1-1

Currently, all of the BLM lands adjacent to the proposed ACEC on the east side of the Franklins are identified as suitable for disposal. We believe the Preferred Alternative can be improved by identifying 2,310 acres of those lands for retention in BLM ownership (see attachment).

The 2,310 acres would provide the Franklins a wider buffer against future development, add topographic and biological diversity to the retained lands, provide potential habitat for sensitive plants, and permit an improved match between the retained lands and the eastern boundary of Franklin Mountains State Park in Texas. On the west side of the Organ Mountains, we note the Preferred Alternative includes retention of an additional 3,840 acres adjacent to the proposed ACEC to provide a wider buffer at the foot of the Organs. A similar retention is justified on the east side of the Franklins.

LO3

Public Hearing - Lordsburg 10/23/91
Thomas Shelley, Phelps Dodge Corporation

--"ADMINISTRATIVELY EXTENDED OR BROADENED THE SCOPE OF FORMAL WITHDRAWALS;

--"BEEN MADE WITH INSUFFICIENT RESOURCE INFORMATION AND WITHOUT BENEFIT OF ANY ECONOMIC TRADEOFF ANALYSIS."

LO3-1 2. HAVING ATTENDED YOUR OPEN HOUSE IN LORDSBURG, NEW MEXICO, ON MAY 30, 1979, YOUR WORKSHOP IN SILVER CITY, NEW MEXICO, SEPTEMBER 19, 1991, AND OTHER PUBLIC MEETINGS IN BETWEEN, WE ARE DISAPPOINTED TO LEARN THAT MINERAL-ENERGY VALUES AND ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN GIVEN TOO LITTLE CONSIDERATION IN THE PROPOSED PLAN. THIS COMMENT APPLIES GENERALLY TO EACH OF THE AREAS RECOMMENDED FOR SPECIAL DESIGNATION UNDER THE PROPOSED PLAN. SPECIFIC EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- 2.1 GOLD, SILVER, LEAD, ZINC AND COPPER DEPOSITS OCCUR WITHIN THE CARLISLE-STEEPLE ROCK DISTRICT OF YOUR ACEC'S AND WSA'S AREAS NM-030-27 AND AZ-4-83. THE U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY BULLETIN 1222-E, TABLE 1, REPORTS $13,086,311 IN ORE AND METALS PRODUCED FROM THE STEEPLE ROCK MINING DISTRICT BETWEEN 1904 AND 1959. CLAIMS THERE REMAIN ACTIVE TODAY.

- 2.2 SILVER, GOLD, COPPER, LEAD, FLUORITE, PUMICE AND PERLITE DEPOSITS EXIST WITHIN THE LORDSBURG-PYRAMID-VIRGINIA MINING DISTRICT OF YOUR AREAS NM-030-11 AND NM-030-012 (REFERENCE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR GEOLOGICAL SURVEY BULLETIN 885).

- 2.3 THE FLORIDA MOUNTAIN MINING DISTRICT CONTAINS KNOWN DEPOSITS OF LEAD, ZINC, SILVER, COPPER, FLUORITE AND MANGANESE (REFERENCE U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY BULLETIN 87). ALTHOUGH NOT PRESENTLY CONSIDERED FOR WILDERNESS STUDY, A MOVE TO RECONSIDER NM-030-034 AND OTHER STUDY AREAS MAY BE UNDERWAY. ALSO, WE SUGGEST THAT THE BEST OPPORTUNITY TO LOCATE NEW DEPOSITS IS IN THE VICINITY OF KNOWN DEPOSITS.

LO3-1 Mineral potential is discussed in Chapter 3 (Affected Environment) and shown on Maps 3-1, 3-2, and 3-3. In determining the areas to be closed to locatable mineral entry under each alternative, consideration was given to the mineral potential of each area vs. other resource values and conflicts. Under the proposed Plan, the only areas that would be closed to locatable mineral entry are the Apache Box ACEC (conflict with the Carlisle-Steeple Rock District), Guadalupe Canyon ACEC (no apparent conflict), Paleozoic Trackways RNA (no apparent conflict), and Organ/Franklin Mountains ACEC. The latter is a highly mineralized area; however, we strongly feel that other resource values far outweigh the mineral values. If this area is designated as a National Conservation Area, Congress will likely withdraw the area from operation under the general mining laws, mineral leasing laws, and mineral material sales. All withdrawals would be subject to valid existing rights.

LO3-1 (Cont'd)

- 2.4 KNOWN MINERAL DEPOSITS WITHIN THE COOK'S PEAK MINING DISTRICT AND THE JOSE SUBDISTRICT INCLUDE LEAD, ZINC, COPPER, GOLD, SILVER AND MANGANESE. YOUR NM-030-031 WILDERNESS INTENSIVE STUDY AREA IS IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO THESE DISTRICTS. AGAIN WE SUGGEST THAT ONE PLACE TO FIND NEW DEPOSITS IS IN THE VICINITY OF KNOWN DEPOSITS.

3. MANY AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST HAVE NOT HAD THE BENEFIT OF HAVING MINERAL RESOURCE SURVEYS COMPLETED BY THE U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY. THOSE AREAS WHICH HAVE BEEN STUDIED AND FOR WHICH SURVEY BULLETINS HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED, WERE NOT MADE AVAILABLE IN A TIMELY MANNER FOR COMMENT BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC. WE LEARNED ON OCTOBER 26, 1990, THAT COMMENTS WERE DUE OCTOBER 29, 1990, FOR NEW WSA'S IN NEW MEXICO. WE DISAGREE WITH SOME OF THE CONCLUSIONS PUBLISHED IN THE BULLETINS WE HAVE SEEN. IT HAS TAKEN MORE THAN A YEAR TO OBTAIN ANY OF THE BULLETINS WHICH WERE IMPORTANT TO THE EVALUATION OF AREAS AS WSA'S, ACEC'S, ETC.

4. WE OPPOSE THOSE ASPECTS OF THE PLAN THAT CIRCUMVENT MINERAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE EXISTING MINING AND ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS. WE OBJECT TO THE WITHDRAWAL OF FEDERAL LANDS FROM MINERAL ENTRY. AS NEARLY AS WE CAN DETERMINE, THERE ARE ABOUT 1,415 HISTORICALLY RECORDED MINERAL ENTRIES IN THE VICINITY OF LONG STANDING WSA'S. ONLY 102 OF THESE REMAIN ACTIVE AND 1,313 ARE MARKED "CASE CLOSED." WE ARE CONCERNED THAT CONTINUED USE OF THESE MINERAL ENTRIES HAS BEEN INHIBITED UNNECESSARILY UNDER WSA DESIGNATION. THE SAME AREAS DESIGNATED ACEC'S IN THE PLAN WILL ADVERSELY IMPACT THE USE OF MINERALS ON THESE LANDS.

LO3

LO3-2

5. WHENEVER WILDLIFE HABITATS, RECREATIONAL USES, VEHICULAR USES ARE AUTHORIZED ON FEDERAL LANDS, DEGRADATION OF ADJOINING STATE AND PRIVATE LANDS MAY OCCUR IF PLANNED USES ARE NOT COMPATIBLE WITH PRIVATE AND STATE LAND USES. SUCH DEGRADATION MAY INCLUDE VANDALISM OF IMPROVEMENTS, RUTTING DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER, DEGRADING VEGETATION DUE TO CROSS COUNTRY VEHICULAR TRAVEL. CONTROL OF ACCESS THROUGH ADJOINING LANDS TO FEDERAL LAND IS OF VITAL CONCERN TO ADJOINING LAND OWNERS. DRUG TRAFFIC MAY FIND SHIELDING WHEN LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES CANNOT MOVE FREELY THROUGH REMOTE OR LESS FREQUENTLY USED AREAS.

AS STATED BEFORE, WE APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW AND COMMENT ON THIS PLAN. WE HAD HOPED TO DO MORE, HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF OUR STRONG INTEREST IN THE USE OF PUBLIC LANDS. REPRESENTATIVES OF PHELPS DODGE ATTEMPTED TO WORK WITH AND PROVIDE INPUT TO THE BLM ON PLAN FORMULATION AFTER OUR COMMENTS WERE SUBMITTED ON THE DRAFT OUTLINE OF THE PLAN, BUT WITH NO SUCCESS.

6. ISSUES OF LAND OWNERSHIP ADJUSTMENTS

PHELPS DODGE FAVORS THE IDENTIFICATION OF 202,710 ACRES OF PUBLIC LAND FOR DISPOSAL TO CONSOLIDATE BLM LANDS AND TO IMPROVE THEIR MANAGEMENT. PHELPS DODGE DOES NOT FAVOR CHANGES IN ABILITY TO EXCHANGE LAND OR TO DISPOSE OF TRACTS WHEN A NEED IS CLEAR. MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY MUST BE AVAILABLE TO ENABLE CHANGES TO BE MADE RAPIDLY TO IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES.

LO3-3

PHELPS DODGE OPPOSES ANY ATTEMPT OF BLM TO ACQUIRE THE FIVE STATE PARKS IN THE AREA. THESE PARKS ARE NOW MANAGED WELL FOR PUBLIC USE AND THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT. WE DO NOT BELIEVE A PROBLEM EXISTS THAT WILL BE SOLVED BY BLM ACQUIRING THEM.

LO3-2 It is the responsibility of the Bureau to manage for multiple uses of public land, which requires access to and across public land for certain uses but also necessitates restrictions of uses in certain areas to protect sensitive resources. The BLM is an active player in law enforcement efforts, through land use planning as well as our own Ranger Operations Staff. We work closely with law enforcement agencies along the border, and we have consulted with them throughout this planning process.

LO3-3 Acquisition of State Parks is not included in the Proposed Plan. No effort will be made to acquire these parks unless the State asks us to do so, as they recently still have with some other State Parks in New Mexico.

LO3

LO3-4 PHELPS DODGE AND OTHERS SUBMITTED EXTENSIVE COMMENTS SINCE 1980 AS TO WHY THESE AREAS SHOULD NOT BE DESIGNATED WILDERNESS. IF UNSUITABLE, FOR VARIOUS REASONS, FOR WILDERNESS CONSIDERATION, THEY ARE ALSO NOT SUITABLE FOR ACEC DESIGNATION, WHICH WOULD PREJUDICE THE PROCESS OF WILDERNESS DESIGNATION BY CREATING WILDERNESS-LIKE CONDITIONS THROUGH MANAGEMENT OF THESE AREAS AS ACEC'S. WE ALSO HOPE THAT THE BLM WOULD NOT TRY TO ACHIEVE DE FACTO WILDERNESS AREAS BY DESCRIPTION AND MANAGEMENT AS ACEC'S. THIS INFRINGES ON THE ROLE OF CONGRESS IN DECIDING WHICH AREAS SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT BE DESIGNATED WILDERNESS. IT ALSO GIVES THESE AREAS WILDERNESS-LIKE MANAGEMENT UNDER LESS STRINGENT REQUIREMENTS THAN EXIST IN THE WILDERNESS DESIGNATION PROCESS.

8. MOST AREAS DESIGNATED FOR INTENSIVE STUDY ARE POCKMARKED WITH STATE AND PRIVATE LAND INCLUSIONS WHICH WILL MAKE THEIR ADMINISTRATION AS WILDERNESS AREAS DIFFICULT AND COSTLY, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE. EXAMPLES ARE STUDY AREAS NM-030-035, -042, -052, -036, -011, -006, -026 AND -031.

9. MANY OF THE FEDERAL LANDS IN THE MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA ARE NOT FENCED AND MUST BE MANAGED IN CONCERT WITH ADJOINING DEEDED AND STATE LANDS. AS IS, THIS PLAN WILL ADVERSELY AFFECT THE FLEXIBILITY IN MANAGEMENT OF THESE OTHER PROPERTIES.

LO3-5 10. MANY OF THE SELECTED INTENSIVE STUDY AREAS AND ACEC'S BORDER IMMEDIATELY ON BUSY HIGHWAYS OR ROADS. INADEQUATE BUFFER ZONES EXIST FOR CONSIDERATION FOR WILDERNESS DESIGNATION OR FOR ACEC DESIGNATION. EXAMPLES ARE STUDY AREAS NM-030-023, -006, -009, -035, -025, -042 AND -003.

LO3-4 The ACEC proposals are completely independent of existing WSA designations. No WSAs have been dropped, or will be dropped until Congress drops them. The only WSAs analyzed in the RMP/EIS are new ones where the BLM has consolidated public land ownership since the Statewide Wilderness EIS. ACECs have been recommended on the basis of important scenic, cultural, or biological values while WSAs and Wilderness Areas are designated for large, natural roadless areas. There can be an overlap of outstanding scenic, cultural, or biological values with large, natural, roadless areas. A comparison of the maps shows that many of the proposed ACECs are in WSAs, but the ACECs are smaller. Not all WSAs are proposed as ACECs; an example is the West Potrillo Mountains WSA which is the largest WSA in New Mexico and has been recommended as suitable for wilderness designation by the BLM. The West Potrillos are a large, natural roadless area that do not meet the relevance and importance criteria for ACEC consideration. ACECs are not de facto wilderness areas, but are managed for the significant resources they contain regardless of the presence or absence of wilderness values. It is not within the scope of this document to revisit existing wilderness recommendations and decisions.

LO3-5 Buffer zones are not necessary for wilderness areas. Of the units you list, only three are currently designated as WSAs. Those areas are the Gila Lower Box (NM-030-023), the Big Hatchet Mountains (NM-030-035), and the Cedar Mountains (NM-030-042). None of these WSAs as designated have major highways as borders. The other units you list (Black Mountain, Granite Gap, Beacon Hill, and Red Rock) were dropped from wilderness consideration in 1980. Please refer to the New Mexico Statewide Wilderness Study Final Environmental Impact Statement.

LO3-6 11. MOST OF THE AREAS, IF NOT ALL, SELECTED FOR INTENSIVE STUDY LACK NATURAL VEGETATION SUITABLE FOR ACEC'S OR WILDERNESS DESIGNATION. MANY INTENSIVE STUDY AREAS HAVE DESERT LIKE, DULL AND UNINTERESTING TOPOGRAPHY WITH LITTLE OR NO WATER, ALSO NOT SUITABLE FOR ACEC'S OR WILDERNESS DESIGNATION. EXAMPLES INCLUDE: NM-030-052, -042, -023, -011, -009 AND -035.

FOR THE AREAS, WHICH ARE EITHER EXISTING ACEC'S AND SMA'S OR ARE NEWLY PROPOSED ACEC'S, ADDITIONAL TIME IS NECESSARY TO INVESTIGATE THE VALIDITY OF THE VALUES CLAIMED AND FOR THE POSSIBLE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED MANAGEMENT CHANGES ON OUR EXISTING AND LIKELY FUTURE RESOURCE UTILIZATION ACTIVITIES, BOTH IN AND ADJACENT TO THESE AREAS.

LO3-7 12. ALTHOUGH WE SUPPORT THE DESIGNATION OF SECTIONS OF THE BUTTERFIELD OR THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAILS FOR HISTORIC OR SCENIC PURPOSES, WE RECOMMEND THAT THE BLM BEGIN WITH THE DESIGNATION OF ONLY RELATIVELY SHORT SECTIONS OF EACH. THE LAND ACQUISITION REQUIRED, DEVELOPMENT OF SHORTER SEGMENTS AND AVAILABILITY TO THE PUBLIC WILL BE MUCH SOONER THAN FOR THE LENGTHS PROPOSED IN ALTERNATIVE C. PORTIONS OF THESE TRAILS ARE EITHER NOT SCENIC OR POSSESS POTENTIAL WATER, ENERGY, MINERAL OR OTHER RESOURCES. MORE TIME IS REQUIRED TO INVESTIGATE THESE POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND COMMENT TO THE BLM. ALSO, A ROAD ALONG THE BUTTERFIELD TRAIL FROM FORT CUMMINGS PAST PONY HILLS PASSES THROUGH THIS STUDY AREA. SEVERAL DAMS ARE LOCATED ALONG THAT PORTION OF THE ROAD.

13. PHELPS DODGE DOES NOT OBJECT TO THE STUDY OF THE FOLLOWING FOUR AREAS FOR WILDERNESS POTENTIAL:

ORGAN NEEDLES	7,630 ACRES
GRAY PEAK	16,080 ACRES
APACHE BOX	6,300 ACRES
PENA BLANCA	4,470 ACRES

LO3-6 Please refer to responses LO3-4 and LO3-5. Of the areas you list, only the West Potrillo Mountains (NM-030-052), the Cedar Mountains (NM-030-042), the Gila Lower Box (NM-030-023), and the Big Hatchet Mountains (NM-030-035) are now WSAs.

LO3-7 It is not practical to designate the trail corridors in short stretches. The objectives for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail and Butterfield Trail are quite different, but both are long, linear areas requiring special management. The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail is a long distance hiking trail, and will be simply a marked route across the Mimbres Resource Area. Designation of the trail in this area is still a long way off in the future. For now, we need to decide which route to follow that will best fulfill the objectives of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail so that we may work on land exchanges and easement acquisitions to allow management of the entire trail corridor as a unit. Without a complete corridor, the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail will have little value. The Butterfield Trail contains historic resources scattered along its length. It is more efficient to deal with the entire length of the Butterfield Trail within New Mexico rather than to plan for its management in numerous separate planning efforts. Only short segments of the trail will be subjected to intensive management, such as the section near Fort Cummings. Special Management Area designation of the Butterfield Trail will not affect the existing detention dams near the trail but could affect future developments along the trail by necessitating mitigation of damage to the trail or other impacts to the Special Management Area.

THIS CONCURRENCE IS CONDITIONED ON THE PROVISION OF ADEQUATE TIME FOR PUBLIC INVESTIGATION OF AND COMMENT ON THESE AREAS. FROM DESCRIPTIONS GIVEN IN THE DRAFT PLAN, THESE AREAS DO NOT HAVE WILDERNESS POTENTIAL. A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION SHOULD VERIFY THIS.

LO3-8 WE QUESTION WHETHER THE ORGAN NEEDLES AREA IS ALSO A PROPOSED ACEC. IF SO IT SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM SUCH CONSIDERATION FOR THE SAME REASONS GIVEN ABOVE FOR PROPOSED WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS.

14. WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

LO3-9 THE GILA LOWER BOX (2,480 ACRES) AND THE GILA MIDDLE BOX (760 ACRES) ARE NOT SUITABLE FOR INCLUSION IN THE WILD AND SCENIC RIVER SYSTEM FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

14.1 THE LOWER BOX AREA CONTAINS MANY WORKS OF MAN AND LACKS WILD AND SCENIC QUALITIES REQUIRED FOR SUCH DESIGNATION.

14.2 BOTH AREAS EXPERIENCE VERY LOW AND INTERMITTENT FLOWS DUE TO LEGAL UPSTREAM WITHDRAWALS.

14.3 FUTURE WATER DEVELOPMENT AS WELL AS PRESENTLY AUTHORIZED WATER DIVERSIONS ON THE UPPER GILA RIVER WILL BE SERIOUSLY IMPEDED BY DESIGNATION OF THE STREAM AS WILD AND SCENIC, WILDERNESS, ACEC'S, ETC. SUCH COMPETING USES WILL INCREASE IN INTENSITY AND THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL WATER WILL NOT DECLINE OR DISAPPEAR.

LO3-8 Please refer to response LO3-4.

LO3-9 These portions of the Gila River will be studied for Wild, Scenic, or Recreational River suitability in a subsequent Legislative EIS. This study must be done to comply with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and existing BLM policies.

LO3

15. VEHICLE MANAGEMENT

PHELPS DODGE GENERALLY SUPPORTS THE ALTERNATIVE C VEHICLE MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL WITH THE FOLLOWING TWO RESERVATIONS:

LO3-10 15.1 THE DESIGNATION OF ROADS AND TRAILS FOR VEHICLE USE IN SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS SHOULD BE OPEN TO PUBLIC INVESTIGATION AND COMMENT.

LO3-11 15.2 CLARIFICATION IS REQUESTED AS TO THE NEED FOR CLOSURE OF 54,900 ACRES ALONG THE MEXICAN BORDER WHICH IS NOT STATED IN THE PLAN.

16. ACCESS

PHELPS DODGE, IN PRINCIPLE, DOES NOT OPPOSE DEVELOPING ACCESS TO PUBLIC LANDS. FOR THIS REASON, WE FAVOR THE ALTERNATIVE C PROPOSAL, WHICH ONLY PROPOSES THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACCESS, BUT NOT ACCESS RESTRICTION.

LO3-12 OUR ONLY RESERVATION IS THAT EACH OF THESE ACCESS DEVELOPMENT PLANS SHOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INVESTIGATION AND COMMENT TO ENSURE THAT RESOURCE UTILIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION CONCERNS ARE UNDERSTOOD AND ADDRESSED BEFOREHAND.

17. MANAGEMENT CONCERNS, ROWS

PHELPS DODGE DOES NOT OPPOSE THE DESIGNATION AS ROW EXCLUSION AREAS THOSE AREAS FINALLY DESIGNATED AS ACEC'S. WE ALSO DO NOT OPPOSE THE DESIGNATION AS ROW AVOIDANCE AREAS THOSE SECTIONS OF THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL AND THE BUTTERFIELD TRAIL THAT ARE FINALLY DEVELOPED FOR PUBLIC USE.

LO3-10 Vehicle designations were addressed in the Draft RMP, which has received intensive public scrutiny and comment.

LO3-11 This closure is discussed on page 2-38 of this document. This closure is proposed to support law enforcement programs along the International border.

LO3-12 Access acquisition and route alternatives will be considered on a case-by-case basis including environmental analyses. Interested parties will have opportunities to comment as these access plans are developed.

LO3

LO3-13 IN THOSE AREAS OPEN TO STANDARD ROW STIPULATIONS, PHELPS DODGE URGES THE BLM TO REQUEST PUBLIC INVESTIGATION AND COMMENT BEFORE TAKING ACTION TO ENSURE THAT DEVELOPMENT OF WATER, ENERGY OR MINERAL RESOURCES IN A PROPOSED ROW IS CONSIDERED.

18. MINERALS

PHELPS DODGE FAVORS THE ALTERNATIVE C RECOMMENDATION WHEREIN THE ENTIRE RESOURCE AREA WOULD REMAIN OPEN TO LOCATABLE MINERAL ENTRY.

LO3-14 IT IS NOT CLEAR TO US WHICH AREAS ARE PROPOSED TO BE CLOSED TO MINING IN ADDITION TO THE ACEC'S AND THE TWO TRAILS. THIS SHOULD BE CLARIFIED IN THE PLAN, AND WE SHOULD THEN HAVE MORE TIME TO DETERMINE THE IMPACT OF THIS PROPOSED CLOSURE.

AS WE COMMENTED BEFORE, MORE TIME IS REQUIRED TO EVALUATE THE PROPOSED ACEC'S (AFTER REMOVING THE WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS FROM ACEC DESIGNATION). IF AFTER THIS TIME AN AREA IS DETERMINED TO POSSESS ACEC QUALITIES, THE DECISION CONCERNING ANY NEED TO CLOSE THIS AREA TO MINING CAN BE MADE. IT MAY NOT BE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST TO UNNECESSARILY WITHDRAW ACEC'S OR PORTIONS THEREOF FROM MINERAL ENTRY.

LO3-15 WE DO NOT FAVOR A BLANKET PROHIBITION AGAINST DISTURBING RIPARIAN AREAS. WE FAVOR IMPROVED MANAGEMENT OF THESE AREAS, BUT STIPULATIONS COULD BE UNNECESSARILY APPLIED PROHIBITING AN OPERATION IF AN ACCESS ROAD PASSES THROUGH A RIPARIAN AREA. THERE SHOULD BE SOME DISCRETION AVAILABLE TO THE BLM AT THE LOCAL LEVEL TO ALLOW AN OPERATION WHERE IMPACT IS MINIMAL.

LO3-16 WE WOULD ALSO LIKE SOME CLARIFICATION ABOUT WHAT SPECIAL MITIGATION WILL BE REQUIRED ON SLOPES GREATER THAN 20 PERCENT AND THEN WE WOULD LIKE TO COMMENT ON THIS.

LO3-13 When a right-of-way application is received in the Mimbres Resource Area, a team of specialists considers every aspect of the project including development of water, energy, or mineral resources. At that time, if we feel the project will be an impact to the human environment, the public is made aware of the project and given a chance to comment.

LO3-14 Most ACECs and the two trails would be closed to mineral material sales and mineral leasing. The only areas that would be closed to locatable mineral entry under the Proposed Plan are the Apache Box ACEC, Guadalupe Canyon ACEC, Paleozoic Trackways RNA, and Organ/Franklin Mountains ACEC.

See "Minerals" under "Management Concerns" in each alternative in the Draft RMP/EIS for specific areas that would be closed to mining activity.

LO3-15 With the exception of the Gila Lower Box, Gila Middle Box, Bear Creek and Guadalupe Canyon, riparian areas found on public land in the Resource Area consist of isolated springs and seeps. Most of these springs and seeps do not occupy large areas and for the most part occur in desert mountain canyons. Chapter 2, Pages 35-36 address riparian management guidelines.

LO3-16 Mitigation practices may consist of all or some of the following: water bars to reduce or eliminate erosion potential on disturbed sites, stockpiling and replacing topsoil, reseeding with native vegetation, and access road design or location stipulations. These actions as well as others, depending on the project or location, may be required.

LO3-17 WE RECOMMEND THAT THE PLAN ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE INVENTORY OF RESOURCE VALUES IS AN ONGOING PROCESS AND THAT NO UNNECESSARY CONSTRAINTS BE APPLIED TO RESPONSIBLE MINERAL AND ENERGY EXPLORATION.

LO3-18 THE EXISTING MINING AND ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS ALLOW MINERAL EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT ON PUBLIC LANDS. WE RECOMMEND THAT THE PLAN NOT RESTRICT THE APPLICATION OF THESE LAWS.

19. RECREATION

PHELPS DODGE FAVORS THE DEVELOPMENT OF RECREATION AREAS ON BLM LANDS AS PROPOSED IN ALTERNATIVE C. WE DO NOT FAVOR THE ACQUISITION OF THE STATE PARKS FOR THE REASONS GIVEN PREVIOUSLY.

LO3-19 WE ARE ALSO CONCERNED THAT THE PRIMITIVE CAMPSITES NOT BE LOCATED WHERE NATURAL RESOURCE EXPLORATION AND UTILIZATION ACTIVITIES CAN OCCUR, NOR IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AREAS.

20. CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

WE PRESENTED COMMENTS ABOVE ON THE DESIGNATION OF ACEC'S AND THE ELIMINATION OF EXISTING WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS AS PROPOSED ACEC'S. IF OUR RECOMMENDATIONS, AS WELL AS THE ONE ON THE TRAILS ARE ADOPTED, A THOROUGH EVALUATION OF PROPOSED ACEC'S FOR THEIR CULTURAL VALUES WILL OCCUR.

AREAS EVENTUALLY DESIGNATED ACEC'S, WHICH HAVE CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES, AND THOSE AREAS OF THE TRAILS FINALLY DESIGNATED SHOULD BE MANAGED AS DESCRIBED IN ALTERNATIVE C.

LO3-17 The BLM's planning process recognizes that RMPs are not static. The monitoring and evaluation that will occur following approval of the RMP will ensure that any new resource inventory information is taken into account in plan maintenance, amendment, or revision.

LO3-18 These laws allow mineral exploration and development on lands that are open to mining. Designation of an ACEC does not by itself close the area to mining but does require a Plan of Operation. The only areas that would be closed to locatable mineral entry under the Proposed Plan are the Apache Box ACEC, Guadalupe Canyon ACEC, Paleozoic Trackways RNA, and Organ/Franklin Mountains ACEC.

LO3-19 Potential conflicts with other resources will be examined in site-specific Environmental Assessments during the early planning stages. We would not locate primitive camps where there would be conflicts with sensitive resources or other uses.

21. WILDLIFE HABITATS

PHELPS DODGE HAS NO COMMENT ON THE WILDLIFE HABITAT PROPOSALS IN ALTERNATIVE C.

22. SOIL, AIR AND WATER

LO3-20 PHELPS DODGE WOULD LIKE CLARIFICATION OF WHAT THE BLM MEANS BY THE MANAGEMENT OF AN AREA AS CLASS II FOR AIR QUALITY AND THEN WE WOULD LIKE TIME TO COMMENT ON THIS.

23. VEGETATION

LO3-21 PHELPS DODGE IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE STATEMENT IN ALTERNATIVE.C THAT THERE MAY BE POSSIBLE REDUCTION OR EXCLUSION OF SURFACE DISTURBING ACTIVITIES ON LANDS THE AGENCY HAS DESIGNATED AS FRAGILE. THIS CONSTITUTES A LARGE QUANTITY OF LAND THAT WE DO NOT AGREE IS CORRECTLY DESIGNATED AS FRAGILE.

WE WOULD PREFER THAT THE BLM VIEW EACH SITE AND PROPOSED ACTIVITY ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS WITH THE EMPHASIS ON ALLOWING THE ACTIVITY IN A MANNER THAT WILL NOT HARM OR WILL IMPROVE THE CONDITION OF FRAGILE LANDS. WE RECOMMEND MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY IN MANAGEMENT OF THESE LANDS, NOT STRINGENT REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS.

24. RIPARIAN AND ARROYO HABITAT

AS DESCRIBED ABOVE, PHELPS DODGE DOES NOT FAVOR THE DESIGNATION OF ACEC'S THOSE AREAS THAT ARE ALREADY WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS OR OTHER AREAS PROPOSED UNTIL THEY HAVE BEEN THOROUGHLY INVESTIGATED AS TO VALUE OF EXISTING OR POTENTIAL RESOURCE UTILIZATION.

LO3-20 Federal and State air quality standards for a Class II air quality allow for a moderate amount of degradation of air quality. At the present time, air quality in the Mimbres Resource Area does not exceed State and Federal air quality standards and is classified as a Class II area. In the Proposed Plan, the only areas where a Class II air quality would be part of a management prescription are the proposed Organ Mountains, Alamo Hueco Mountains, and Big Hatchet Mountains ACECs. Management of an area for Class II air quality would consist of monitoring air quality, if needed, in these areas and working with the appropriate Federal and State agencies to mitigate any activities which may reduce the air quality of these three areas.

LO3-21 The fragile lands identified in this plan are areas with highly erodible soils and vegetation types in poor to fair range condition. See page 3-8 of the RMP/EIS. As was stated in the plan, there may be possible reductions or exclusions of surface disturbing activities on these lands. This classification is meant to serve as a "red flag" or warning, not as a rigid rule to restrict or exclude all surface-disturbing activities. Each action that occurs within these areas will be reviewed and appropriate mitigating measures or stipulations developed on a case-by-case basis.

AGAIN, WE DO NOT FAVOR THE INCLUSION OF THE GILA RIVER AREAS IN THE WILD AND SCENIC RIVER SYSTEM.

FINALLY, ALSO AS NOTED ABOVE, WE DO NOT FAVOR THE ATTEMPT TO SECURE INSTREAM FLOWS FOR THESE AREAS.

25. SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

LO3-22 PHELPS DODGE FAVORS THE CONSIDERATION OF AN AREA AS AN ACEC IF, AMONG THE VALUES CONSIDERED, IT CONTAINS SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES. WE ARE CONCERNED, HOWEVER, THAT THE SPECIES LISTED ARE INDEED SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES AND, IF SO, THAT THEY ARE PRESENT IN THE AREAS LISTED.

WE REQUEST CLARIFICATION FROM THE BLM ON THESE ISSUES AND TIME TO COMMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF DETERMINING THE SUITABILITY OF AREAS AS ACEC'S AND SMA'S.

EXISTING WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED FOR ACEC DESIGNATION.

WE THANK YOU AGAIN FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON YOUR DRAFT PLAN. WE HOPE THESE COMMENTS WILL BE CONSIDERED IN YOUR FORMULATION OF A FINAL PLAN. FINALLY, WE WOULD AGAIN LIKE TO EMPHASIZE OUR REQUEST, FOR THE REASONS STATED PREVIOUSLY, FOR AN ADDITIONAL THREE MONTHS TO THOROUGHLY REVIEW THE IMPACT OF THE PLAN, TO MEET WITH THE BLM AND TO SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS.

THANK YOU.

LO3-22 Of the 21 proposed ACECs, 11 contain habitat and populations of special status species. Special status includes the following classifications: (1) Federal endangered, (2) Federal threatened, (3) Federal candidate, (4) State endangered, and (5) State sensitive.

The Endangered Species Act (a Federal Law) states that "all Federal departments and agencies shall seek to conserve endangered species and threatened species . . ." This includes management or protection of habitat as needed for recovery. BLM policy requires managing candidate species (and their habitat) to prevent these species from becoming listed as threatened or endangered. BLM policy also requires managing for the protection of State-listed and sensitive species.

1

Bureau of Land Management
Las Cruces District Office
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Re: Draft Mimbres Resource Management Plan

August 21, 1991

Dear Sirs:

Following are my comments on this subject. I do wish to thank you for providing me the opportu;nity to express my comments.

1-1 It would have been helpful to see a map of the area under consideration. Perhaps I missed this someplace.

1-2 At any rate, I perused the portion on minerals and did not see anything on minerals as they pertain to the "week end" mineral collector. In order to preclude problems that occured with the now famous New Mexico smoky quartz site, I suggest you include provisions for the "week end" collector who may remove 50 to 75 pounds of material. As you know, it is usual that less than a few pounds of specimens would be contained in that 50 to 75 pounds of rough and trimming the miscellaneous material is more easily done at home than out in the field.

1-3 I further suggest that the BLM provide the "week end" mineral collectors with a card that authorizes them to collect 50 to 75 pounds of material per day providing they do not dig holes more than X feet deep and X feet in diameter. (X - to be filled in by the BLM) The various law type people must be advised of these permit cards so the individual is not arrested anyhow. Why my interest in this? A friend of mine had a letter of authorization from the Forest Service to collect the smoky quartz but was still arrested when he returned to his vehicle. Of course, the court threw this case out when it came to trial but why clog up the court system with things that are done legally. Besides, it cost my friend money to go from Albuquerque to the site of the court case over a hundre miles away.

Yours truly,

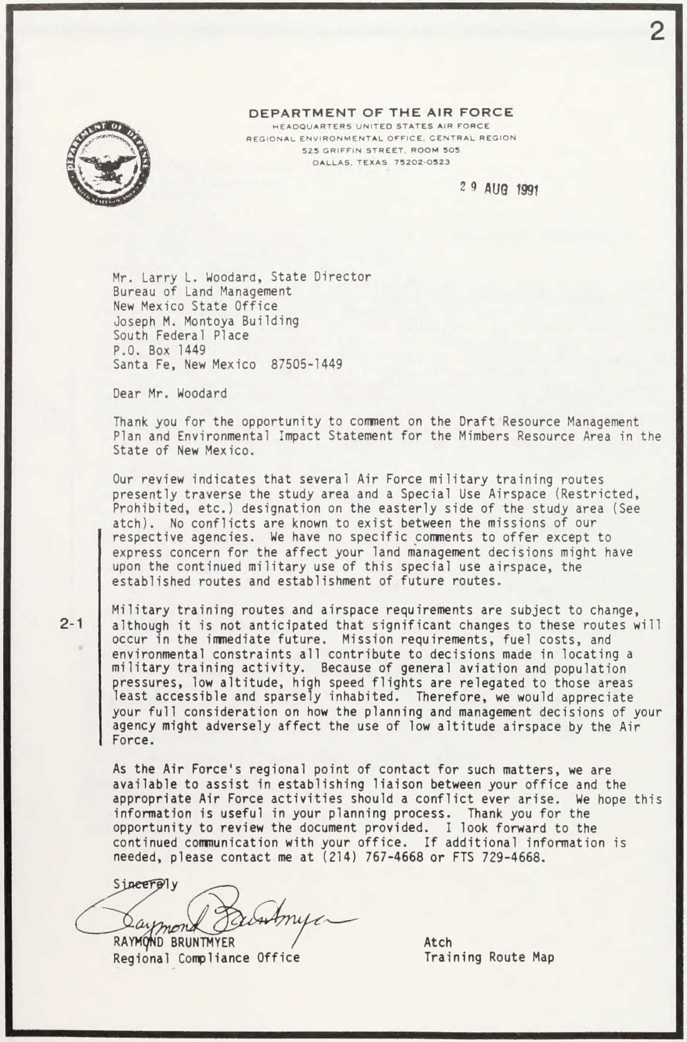
T. J. Schmierer
5010 Crownpoint Court, N. W.
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87120-1113

1-1 A general location map is shown on page 1-2 of the Draft. Other maps are located immediately following the index at the end of the document. All maps are listed on pages viii and ix of the Table of Contents.

If you received only the Draft RMP/EIS summary packet, no map was included. Maps for the Proposed Plan are reprinted in this Proposed Plan/Final EIS.

1-2 Provisions already exist for mineral collecting. The regulations are found in 43 CFR 8365.1-5. These regulations state that reasonable amounts of rocks, mineral specimens, common invertebrate fossils, and semi-precious gemstones can be collected from public land for noncommercial purposes. The materials cannot be sold or traded.

1-3 We see no need for a mineral collector permit. The existing regulations for collection are adequate. BLM Rangers are familiar with the public land laws and regulations. If a BLM Ranger finds someone digging holes on public land, he/she is certainly justified in asking questions because this activity would appear to be more than casual collecting.



2

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICE, CENTRAL REGION
525 GRIFFIN STREET, ROOM 505
DALLAS, TEXAS 75202-0523

29 AUG 1991

Mr. Larry L. Woodard, State Director
Bureau of Land Management
New Mexico State Office
Joseph M. Montoya Building
South Federal Place
P.O. Box 1449
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505-1449

Dear Mr. Woodard

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for the Mimbers Resource Area in the State of New Mexico.

Our review indicates that several Air Force military training routes presently traverse the study area and a Special Use Airspace (Restricted, Prohibited, etc.) designation on the easterly side of the study area (See atch). No conflicts are known to exist between the missions of our respective agencies. We have no specific comments to offer except to express concern for the affect your land management decisions might have upon the continued military use of this special use airspace, the established routes and establishment of future routes.

2-1 Military training routes and airspace requirements are subject to change, although it is not anticipated that significant changes to these routes will occur in the immediate future. Mission requirements, fuel costs, and environmental constraints all contribute to decisions made in locating a military training activity. Because of general aviation and population pressures, low altitude, high speed flights are relegated to those areas least accessible and sparsely inhabited. Therefore, we would appreciate your full consideration on how the planning and management decisions of your agency might adversely affect the use of low altitude airspace by the Air Force.

As the Air Force's regional point of contact for such matters, we are available to assist in establishing liaison between your office and the appropriate Air Force activities should a conflict ever arise. We hope this information is useful in your planning process. Thank you for the opportunity to review the document provided. I look forward to the continued communication with your office. If additional information is needed, please contact me at (214) 767-4668 or FTS 729-4668.

Sincerely

Raymond Bruntmyer

RAYMOND BRUNTMYER
Regional Compliance Office

Atch
Training Route Map

2-1 None of the decisions or designations resulting from the Proposed Plan would place any additional restrictions on military missions. The primary concern over low altitude, high speed flights is the potential impact on desert bighorn sheep which inhabit several isolated mountain ranges in the "Bootheel" of New Mexico. We would continue to work with the Air Force or other military organizations to mitigate the effects of such activities as needed.

3

4 Sept 1991
4425 Big Sky Drive
Las Cruces, NM 88001

Bureau of Land Management

Mr. Tim Salt
Mimbres Resource Area Manager

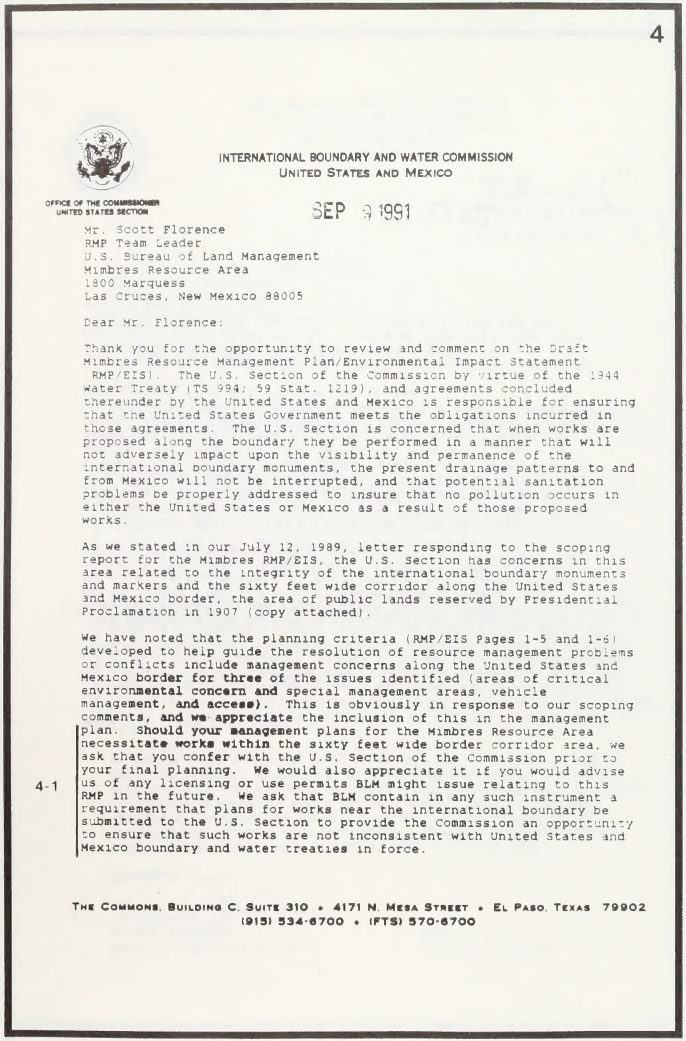
Dear Sir:

I am providing the following written comments to the Draft Mimbres RMP/EIS. These comments are based on the summary dated 16 Aug 1991. In lieu of commenting on every item detailed in the summary, I have instead highlighted those parts of the summary that I am in favor of. The highlighted summary is attached to this letter.

For the most part I find Alternate B to be the type of land management plan that I would like to see implemented. I do like the parts of Alternate D that increase the SRMA's and the amount of tourism interpretation available. Also the property tax increases and gross receipts increases from tourism are appealing in Alternate D. The only item I can agree with in Alternate A is the continuance of existing vegetation sale areas rather than opening new areas. I found no uniquely appealing items in Alternate C (there were some duplicates from Alternate B, of course).

I consider the elimination of 200,000 acres from livestock grazing to be a key and very attractive point, in particular, for Alternate B. I believe this will have very positive impacts on the vegetation and the riparian and arroyo habitats.

Sincerely Yours,
Walter Mirczak
Walter Mirczak



4

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
UNITED STATES SECTION

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION
UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

SEP 9 1991

Mr. Scott Florence
RMP Team Leader
U.S. Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Dear Mr. Florence:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Mimbres Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS). The U.S. Section of the Commission by virtue of the 1944 Water Treaty (TS 994; 59 Stat. 1219), and agreements concluded thereunder by the United States and Mexico is responsible for ensuring that the United States Government meets the obligations incurred in those agreements. The U.S. Section is concerned that when works are proposed along the boundary they be performed in a manner that will not adversely impact upon the visibility and permanence of the international boundary monuments, the present drainage patterns to and from Mexico will not be interrupted, and that potential sanitation problems be properly addressed to insure that no pollution occurs in either the United States or Mexico as a result of those proposed works.

As we stated in our July 12, 1989, letter responding to the scoping report for the Mimbres RMP/EIS, the U.S. Section has concerns in this area related to the integrity of the international boundary monuments and markers and the sixty feet wide corridor along the United States and Mexico border, the area of public lands reserved by Presidential Proclamation in 1907 (copy attached).

We have noted that the planning criteria (RMP/EIS Pages 1-5 and 1-6) developed to help guide the resolution of resource management problems or conflicts include management concerns along the United States and Mexico border for three of the issues identified (areas of critical environmental concern and special management areas, vehicle management, and access). This is obviously in response to our scoping comments, and we appreciate the inclusion of this in the management plan. 4-1 Should your management plans for the Mimbres Resource Area necessitate works within the sixty feet wide border corridor area, we ask that you confer with the U.S. Section of the Commission prior to your final planning. We would also appreciate it if you would advise us of any licensing or use permits BLM might issue relating to this RMP in the future. We ask that BLM contain in any such instrument a requirement that plans for works near the international boundary be submitted to the U.S. Section to provide the Commission an opportunity to ensure that such works are not inconsistent with United States and Mexico boundary and water treaties in force.

THE COMMONS, BUILDING C, SUITE 310 • 4171 N. MESA STREET • EL PASO, TEXAS 79902
(915) 534-6700 • (FTS) 570-6700

4-1 At this time, there is nothing in the RMP relative to works, licensing, or use permits along the border. If any such actions arise in the future, the Commission will be given the opportunity to review and comment accordingly.

4

The United States and Mexico, through the International Boundary and Water Commission and predecessor joint Commissions, placed and jointly maintain Monuments No. 1 through No. 71 along the southern boundary of the Mimbres Resource Area. A list of the international monuments along Dona Ana, Luna and Hidalgo Counties and the distance from one to the other is attached for your information. 4-2 To prevent inadvertent displacement or line of sight obstruction of any monuments or markers in this area, we ask you in your capacity as federal land manager in this area assist the U.S. Section in guaranteeing that no work be performed within sixty feet of the international boundary. In some cases, fences have been constructed near the international boundary, and it is important to understand that these fences do not designate the boundary.

The U.S. Section also needs to ensure that present drainage patterns are not interrupted and that surface and ground water resources are 4-3 not impacted in the areas near the international boundary. We ask that you assist the U.S. Section in avoiding any differences with Mexico over these matters by protecting boundary drainage patterns and groundwater resources.

And finally, the United States and Mexico Commissioners have agreed that no transboundary pollution or other sanitation problems will 4-4 occur from new developments along the international boundary. We ask that you in your capacity as federal land manager in this area assist us in ensuring that no transboundary sanitation problems occur in this area.

Sincerely,

Conrad G. Keyes, Jr.

Conrad G. Keyes, Jr.
Principal Engineer, Planning

Attachments:
1907 Presidential Proclamation
Western Land Boundary Monuments in Dona Ana, Luna and Hidalgo Counties, New Mexico

4-2 We concur with the 60-foot restriction and will do what is within our authority to prevent any work that would obstruct or disturb boundary monuments or markers.

4-3 There are no proposals in the RMP which would negatively affect drainage patterns or groundwater resources along the border. Expansion of the vehicle closure along the border may have a positive effect on these resources by protecting the soil and vegetation.

4-4 There are no proposals in the RMP which would affect transboundary pollution or other sanitation problems. We will do what is within our authority to prevent these problems from occurring.

WESTERN LAND BOUNDARY MONUMENTS
COORDINATED BY DISTANCE

TYPE:
M=Masonry
I=Iron
G=Granite
MA=Marble

ELEVATION:
*=+/-1.00M
**=+/-0.50M
***=+/-2.00M
****=+/-0.10M
*****=+/-0.20M
******=+/-0.30M
*******=+/-5.00M

NEW MEXICO--DONA ANA COUNTY

MON #	Latitude	Longitude	Distance Meters	Distance Miles	Miles Btw.Mon.	Elev. Meters	Type
Rio Grande at N 31 47' Boundary Parallel							
1	N 31 47 01.608	W 106 31 45.109	150.00	0.09		1131.90	M
					0.44		
2	N 31 47 01.625	W 106 32 12.162	861.89	0.53		1303.80	M
					0.74		
2A	N 31 47 01.626	W 106 32 57.273	2048.76	1.27			I
					0.41		
2B	N 31 47 01.627	W 106 33 22.598	2715.05	1.68			I
					0.65		
2C	N 31 47 01.628	W 106 34 54.182	3759.46	2.33			I
					0.85		
3	N 31 47 01.629	W 106 34 54.182	5124.64	3.18		1255.70	M
					4.70		
4	N 31 47 01	W 106 39 42	12690.69	7.88		1247.90	I
					4.68		
5	N 31 47 01	W 106 43 58	20221.37	12.56		1245.50	I
					4.93		
6	N 31 47 02	W 106 49 32	28152.23	17.49		1250.90	I
					4.79		
7	N 31 47 02	W 106 54 24	35855.89	22.28		1255.10	I
					4.89		
8	N 31 47 02	W 106 59 25	43729.23	27.17		*1297.20	I
					0.87		
9	N 31 47 00	W 107 00 17	45129.58	28.04		*1288.70	I
					4.36		
10	N 31 47 01	W 107 04 43	52141.21	32.40		*1259.10	I
					4.84		
11	N 31 47 00	W 107 09 41	59935.86	37.24		1248.10	M
					3.17		
12	N 31 47 00	W 107 12 55	65030.65	40.41		**1239.50	I
					4.30		

NEW MEXICO--LUNA COUNTY

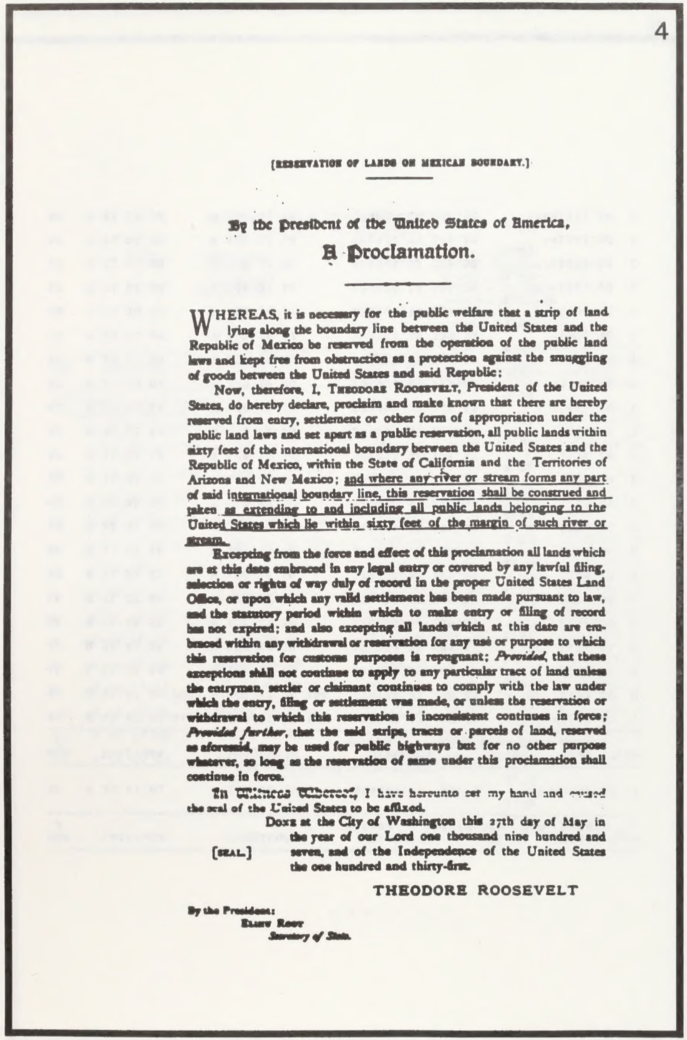
MON #	Latitude	Longitude	Distance Meters	Distance Miles	Miles Btw. Mon.	Elev. Meters	Type
13R	N 31 47 02	W 107 17 18	71943.81	44.71		**1236.20	
					2.90		
14	N 31 47 02	W 107 20 15	76617.03	47.61		**1319.30	I
					2.04		
15	N 31 47 02	W 107 22 20	79899.79	49.65		1280.10	M
					1.03		
16	N 31 47 01	W 107 23 21	81556.67	50.68		*1269.70	I
					2.70		
17	N 31 47 01	W 107 26 06	85896.59	53.38		**1203.60	I
					2.41		
18	N 31 47 01	W 107 28 33	89771.64	55.79		1205.60	I
					2.62		
19	N 31 47 00	W 107 31 14	93981.40	58.41		1208.40	I
					2.47		
20	N 31 47 00	W 107 33 45	97951.26	60.88		1211.00	I
					2.13		
21	N 31 47 00	W 107 35 56	101382.19	63.01		1213.10	M
					1.24		
22	N 31 47 00	W 107 37 12	103374.61	64.25		1212.90	I
					1.00		
23	N 31 47 00	W 107 38 13	104984.43	65.25		1219.40	I
					2.76		
24	N 31 41 02	W 107 41 02	109420.30	68.01		1259.30	I
					2.37		
25	N 31 47 00	W 107 43 26	113238.63	70.38		*1297.70	I
					0.83		
26	N 31 47 00	W 107 44 17	114567.17	71.21		1315.80	M
					1.92		
27	N 31 47 00	W 107 46 14	117660.45	73.13		1294.80	I
					2.19		
28	N 31 47 00	W 107 48 30	121187.82	75.32		1306.00	I
					2.28		
29	N 31 47 00	W 107 50 50	124864.12	77.60		**1272.60	I
					2.67		
30	N 31 47 00	W 107 53 34	129166.72	80.27		1271.70	I
					2.13		
31	N 31 47 00.88	W 107 55 44.22	132595.30	82.40		*1433.50	I
					1.51		
32	N 31 47 00.884	W 107 57 16.868	135032.23	83.91		1487.80	M
					0.71		
33	N 31 47 01	W 107 58 00	136175.88	84.62		1387.60	M
					2.58		
34	N 31 47 01	W 108 00 38	140330.63	87.20		1387.20	I
					2.82		
35	N 31 47 01	W 108 03 31	144868.78	90.02		**1346.20	I
					2.30		
36	N 31 47 01	W 108 05 51	148570.12	92.32		1347.20	I
					1.86		
37	N 31 47 01	W 108 07 46	151569.89	94.18		1384.70	I

MON #	Latitude	Longitude	Distance Meters	Distance Miles	Miles Btw. Mon.	Elev. Meters	Type
					1.61		
38	N 31 47 01	W 108 09 25	154162.13	95.79		***1458.80	I
					1.73		

NEW MEXICO--HIDALGO COUNTY

MON #	Latitude	Longitude	Distance Meters	Distance Miles	Miles Btw. Mon.	Elev. Meters	Type
39	N 31 47 00.943	W 108 11 10.312	156940.17	97.52		***1518.40	I
					1.28		
40	N 31 47 00.954	W 108 12 28.364	158995.81	98.80		1494.20	M
					2.07		
41	N 31 45 13	W 108 12 28	162324.15	100.87		1569.10	I
					2.76		
42	N 31 42 50	W 108 12 30	166772.88	103.63		1404.20	I
					2.21		
43	N 31 40 53	W 108 12 30	170335.33	105.84		1333.00	I
					2.29		
44	N 31 38 54	W 108 12 30	174025.47	108.13		1279.60	I
					2.95		
45	N 31 36 21	W 108 12 30	178775.44	111.08		1255.70	I
					2.96		
46	N 31 33 46	W 108 12 30	183534.01	114.04		1270.80	M
					2.97		
47	N 31 31 09	W 108 12 30	188307.92	117.01		1294.80	I
					2.42		
48	N 31 29 03	W 108 12 30	192196.61	119.43		1313.90	I
					2.76		
49	N 31 26 39	W 108 12 30	196639.78	122.19		1326.80	I
					2.72		
50	N 31 24 18	W 108 12 30	201021.98	124.91		1335.20	I
					2.52		
51	N 31 22 06	W 108 12 30	205071.09	127.43		1344.10	I
					2.06		
52	N 31 20 16	W 108 12 30	208392.38	129.49		1449.70	I
					0.34		
53	N 31 20 00	W 108 12 30	208934.48	129.83		1408.20	M
					2.47		
54	N 31 20 00	W 108 15 00	212915.57	132.30		1396.00	I
					4.21		
55	N 31 20 00	W 108 19 17	219683.82	136.51		1508.90	I
					1.33		
56	N 31 20 00	W 108 20 37	221821.94	137.84		1606.40	I
					2.25		
57	N 31 20 00	W 108 22 53	225439.16	140.09		****1643.00	I
					3.49		
58	N 31 20 00	W 108 26 25	231048.82	143.58		*****1539.50	I
					1.30		
59	N 31 20 00	W 108 27 44	233141.71	144.88		**1543.00	I
					4.02		
60	N 31 20 00	W 108 31 49	239618.26	148.90		****1413.50	I

MON #	Latitude	Longitude	Distance Meters	Distance Miles	Miles Btw. Mon.	Elev. Meters	Type
					3.59		
61	N 31 20 00	W 108 35 29	245393.21	152.49		1555.30	I
					1.39		
62	N 31 20 00	W 108 36 51	247583.59	153.85		1619.30	I
					2.07		
63	N 31 20 00	W 108 38 56	250917.61	155.92		1535.10	I
					2.49		
64	N 31 20 00	W 108 41 29	254929.44	158.41		1619.70	M
					3.84		
65	N 31 19 56	W 108 45 23	261105.37	162.25		**2048.30	M
					3.36		
66	N 31 19 56	W 108 48 47	266509.17	165.61		1576.90	M
					2.99		
67	N 31 19 55.745	W 108 51 47.611	271317.40	168.60		1573.10	M
					2.06		
68	N 31 19 57	W 108 53 54	274630.99	170.66		1584.10	I
					3.10		
69	N 31 19 56	W 108 57 01	279614.83	173.76		1609.00	I
					2.07		
70	N 31 19 56	W 108 59 08	282939.01	175.83		1662.20	I
					3.78		
71	N 31 19 56.35	W 109 02 56.82	289029.23	179.61		*1489.10	I



4

[RESERVATION OF LANDS ON MEXICAN BOUNDARY.]

By the President of the United States of America,

A Proclamation.

WHEREAS, it is necessary for the public welfare that a strip of land lying along the boundary line between the United States and the Republic of Mexico be reserved from the operation of the public land laws and kept free from obstruction as a protection against the smuggling of goods between the United States and said Republic:

Now, therefore, I, THEODORE ROOSEVELT, President of the United States, do hereby declare, proclaim and make known that there are hereby reserved from entry, settlement or other form of appropriation under the public land laws and set apart as a public reservation, all public lands within sixty feet of the international boundary between the United States and the Republic of Mexico, within the State of California and the Territories of Arizona and New Mexico; and where any river or stream forms any part of said international boundary line, this reservation shall be construed and taken as extending to and including all public lands belonging to the United States which lie within sixty feet of the margin of such river or stream.

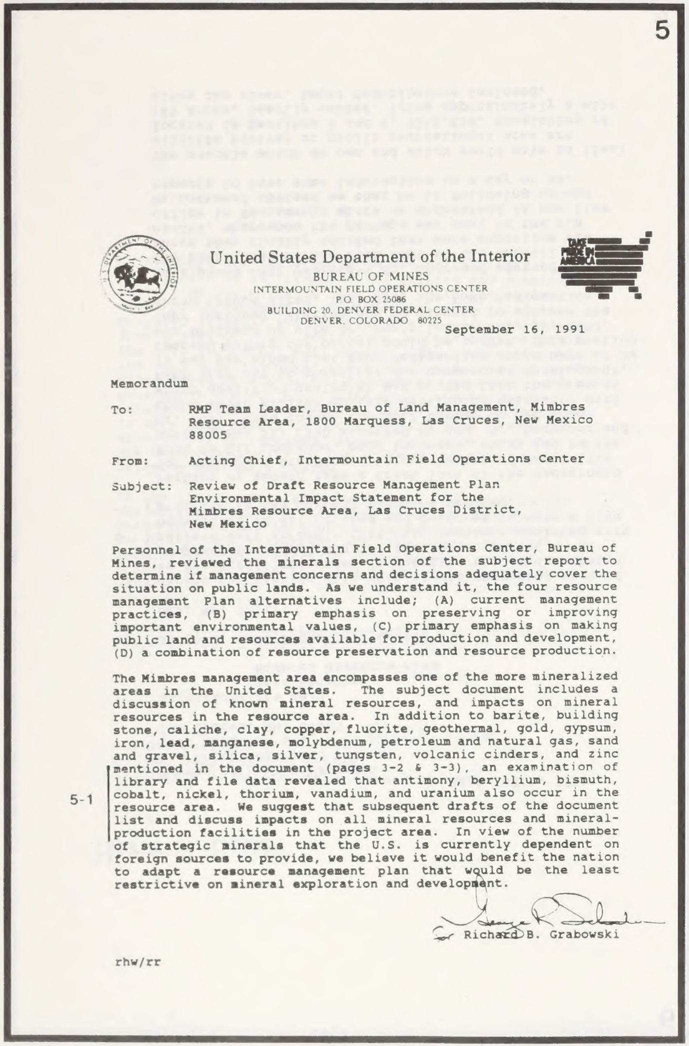
Excepting from the force and effect of this proclamation all lands which are at this date embraced in any legal entry or covered by any lawful filing, selection or rights of way duly of record in the proper United States Land Office, or upon which any valid settlement has been made pursuant to law, and the statutory period within which to make entry or filing of record has not expired; and also excepting all lands which at this date are embraced within any withdrawal or reservation for any use or purpose to which this reservation for customs purposes is repugnant; *Provided*, that these exceptions shall not continue to apply to any particular tract of land unless the entryman, settler or claimant continues to comply with the law under which the entry, filing or settlement was made, or unless the reservation or withdrawal to which this reservation is inconsistent continues in force; *Provided further*, that the said strips, tracts or parcels of land, reserved as aforesaid, may be used for public highways but for no other purpose whatever, so long as the reservation of same under this proclamation shall continue in force.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

[SEAL.] DONE at the City of Washington this 27th day of May in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and seven, and of the Independence of the United States the one hundred and thirty-first.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

By the President:
ELIHU ROOT
Secretary of State.



5

United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF MINES
INTERMOUNTAIN FIELD OPERATIONS CENTER
P.O. BOX 25086
BUILDING 20, DENVER FEDERAL CENTER
DENVER, COLORADO 80225

September 16, 1991

Memorandum

To: RMP Team Leader, Bureau of Land Management, Mimbres Resource Area, 1800 Marquess, Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

From: Acting Chief, Intermountain Field Operations Center

Subject: Review of Draft Resource Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement for the Mimbres Resource Area, Las Cruces District, New Mexico

Personnel of the Intermountain Field Operations Center, Bureau of Mines, reviewed the minerals section of the subject report to determine if management concerns and decisions adequately cover the situation on public lands. As we understand it, the four resource management Plan alternatives include; (A) current management practices, (B) primary emphasis on preserving or improving important environmental values, (C) primary emphasis on making public land and resources available for production and development, (D) a combination of resource preservation and resource production.

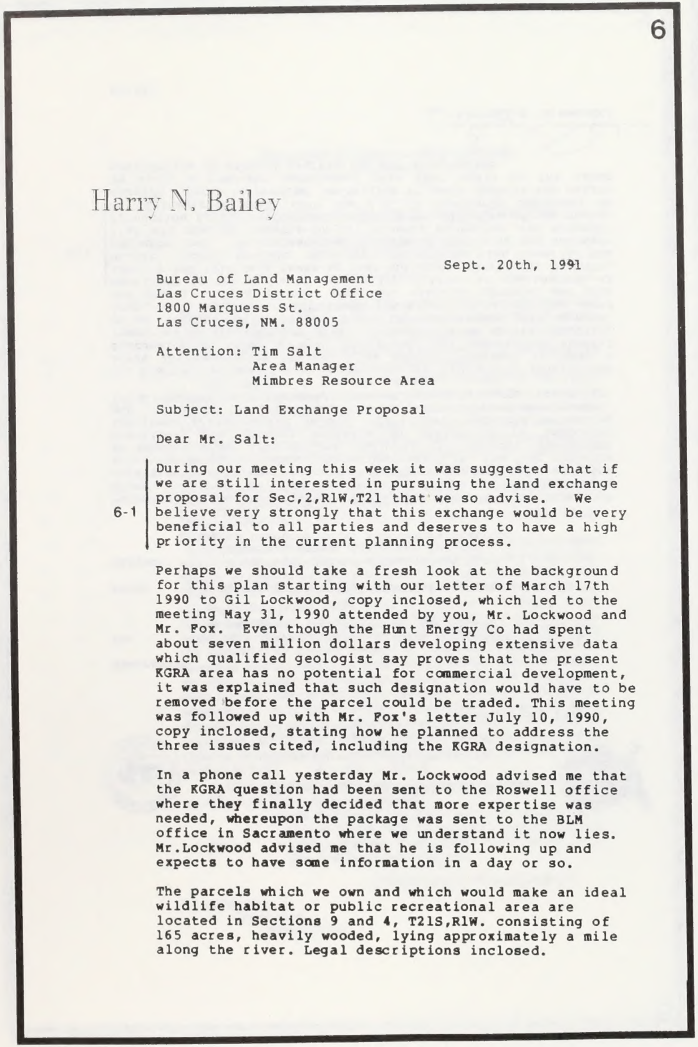
The Mimbres management area encompasses one of the more mineralized areas in the United States. The subject document includes a discussion of known mineral resources, and impacts on mineral resources in the resource area. In addition to barite, building stone, caliche, clay, copper, fluorite, geothermal, gold, gypsum, iron, lead, manganese, molybdenum, petroleum and natural gas, sand and gravel, silica, silver, tungsten, volcanic cinders, and zinc mentioned in the document (pages 3-2 & 3-3), an examination of library and file data revealed that antimony, beryllium, bismuth, cobalt, nickel, thorium, vanadium, and uranium also occur in the resource area. We suggest that subsequent drafts of the document list and discuss impacts on all mineral resources and mineral-production facilities in the project area. 5-1 In view of the number of strategic minerals that the U.S. is currently dependent on foreign sources to provide, we believe it would benefit the nation to adapt a resource management plan that would be the least restrictive on mineral exploration and development.

for Richard B. Grabowski

rhw/rr

5-1 You are correct that these additional elements occur within the Resource Area. The narrative has been changed to reflect the occurrence of these elements. It was not our intent to list each specific element and chemical compound that occurs in the Resource Area. We were only trying to show that the Resource Area contains a variety of leasable, locatable, and salable mineral resources.

We feel the discussion of impacts to mineral resources is adequate. It would be impractical and speculative to discuss possible impacts to each mineral resource that occurs in the Resource Area.



6

Harry N. Bailey

Sept. 20th, 1991

Bureau of Land Management
Las Cruces District Office
1800 Marquess St.
Las Cruces, NM. 88005

Attention: Tim Salt
Area Manager
Mimbres Resource Area

Subject: Land Exchange Proposal

Dear Mr. Salt:

6-1 During our meeting this week it was suggested that if we are still interested in pursuing the land exchange proposal for Sec,2,R1W,T21 that we so advise. We believe very strongly that this exchange would be very beneficial to all parties and deserves to have a high priority in the current planning process.

Perhaps we should take a fresh look at the background for this plan starting with our letter of March 17th 1990 to Gil Lockwood, copy inclosed, which led to the meeting May 31, 1990 attended by you, Mr. Lockwood and Mr. Fox. Even though the Hunt Energy Co had spent about seven million dollars developing extensive data which qualified geologist say proves that the present KGRA area has no potential for commercial development, it was explained that such designation would have to be removed before the parcel could be traded. This meeting was followed up with Mr. Fox's letter July 10, 1990, copy inclosed, stating how he planned to address the three issues cited, including the KGRA designation.

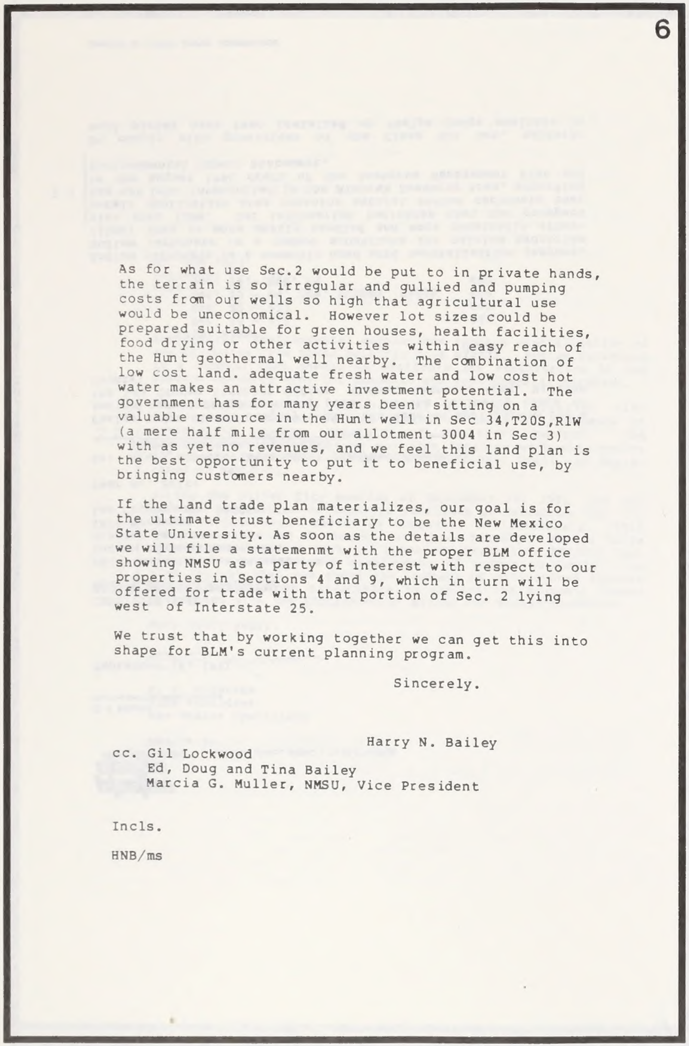
In a phone call yesterday Mr. Lockwood advised me that the KGRA question had been sent to the Roswell office where they finally decided that more expertise was needed, whereupon the package was sent to the BLM office in Sacramento where we understand it now lies. Mr.Lockwood advised me that he is following up and expects to have some information in a day or so.

The parcels which we own and which would make an ideal wildlife habitat or public recreational area are located in Sections 9 and 4, T21S,R1W. consisting of 165 acres, heavily wooded, lying approximately a mile along the river. Legal descriptions inclosed.

6-1 The BLM has determined that the land is not suitable for disposal, and we will not process an exchange at this time for the following reasons:

1. These lands are in a Known Geothermal Resource Area (KGRA) that has been designated by the U.S. Geological Survey. The data that we collected during a previous Environmental Assessment indicates a valuable mineral resource for low temperature geothermal direct use. Disposing of the surface would create a split-estate and restrict the development of the valuable geothermal resource.

2. The land is in a well-blocked area of public land which is identified for retention in the RMP.



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As for what use Sec.2 would be put to in private hands, the terrain is so irregular and gullied and pumping costs from our wells so high that agricultural use would be uneconomical. However lot sizes could be prepared suitable for green houses, health facilities, food drying or other activities within easy reach of the Hunt geothermal well nearby. The combination of low cost land. adequate fresh water and low cost hot water makes an attractive investment potential. The government has for many years been sitting on a valuable resource in the Hunt well in Sec 34,T20S,R1W (a mere half mile from our allotment 3004 in Sec 3) with as yet no revenues, and we feel this land plan is the best opportunity to put it to beneficial use, by bringing customers nearby.

If the land trade plan materializes, our goal is for the ultimate trust beneficiary to be the New Mexico State University. As soon as the details are developed we will file a statemenmt with the proper BLM office showing NMSU as a party of interest with respect to our properties in Sections 4 and 9, which in turn will be offered for trade with that portion of Sec. 2 lying west of Interstate 25.

We trust that by working together we can get this into shape for BLM's current planning program.

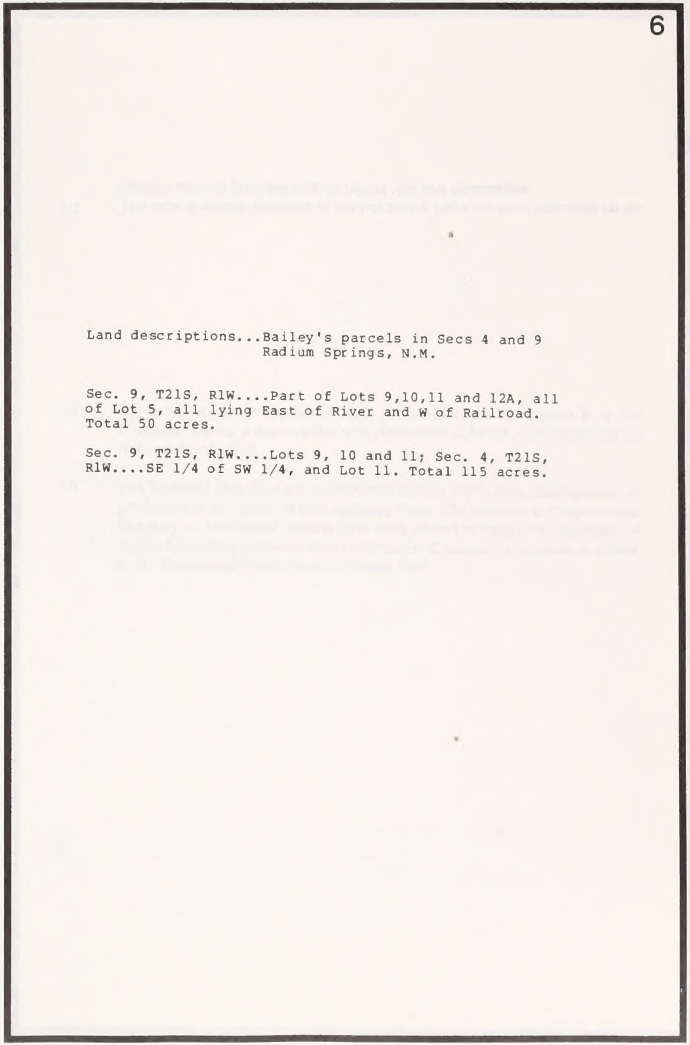
Sincerely.

Harry N. Bailey

cc. Gil Lockwood
Ed, Doug and Tina Bailey
Marcia G. Muller, NMSU, Vice President

Incls.

HNB/ms

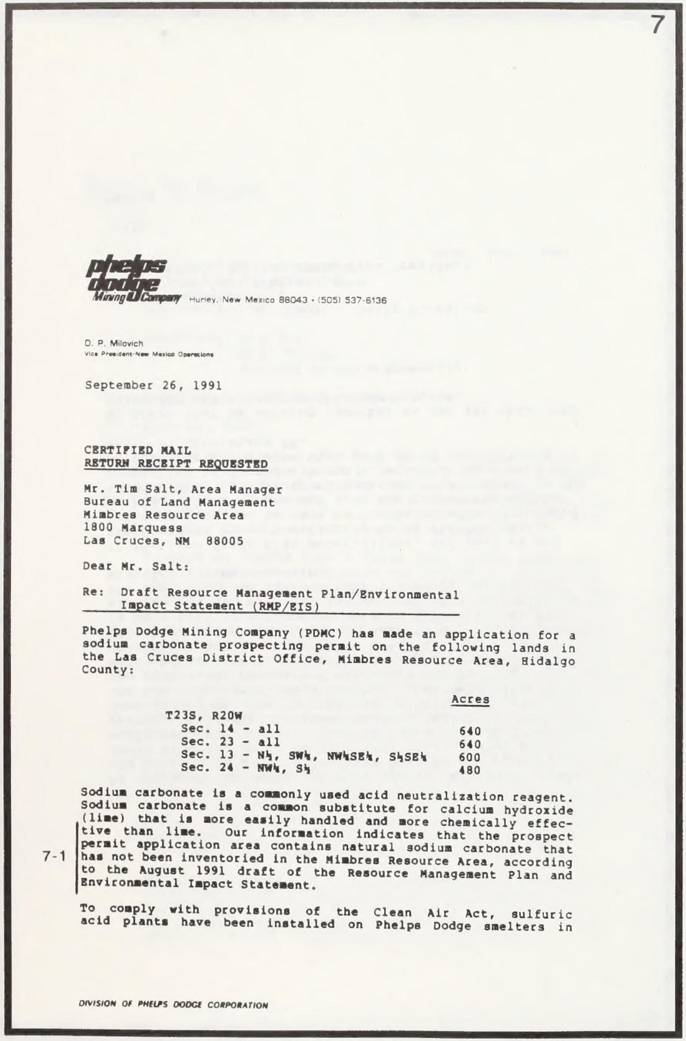


6

Land descriptions...Bailey's parcels in Secs 4 and 9
Radium Springs, N.M.

Sec. 9, T21S, R1W....Part of Lots 9,10,11 and 12A, all of Lot 5, all lying East of River and W of Railroad. Total 50 acres.

Sec. 9, T21S, R1W....Lots 9, 10 and 11; Sec. 4, T21S, R1W....SE 1/4 of SW 1/4, and Lot 11. Total 115 acres.



7

phelps dodge Mining Company Hurley, New Mexico 88043 · (505) 537-6136

D. P. Milovich
Vice President-New Mexico Operations

September 26, 1991

CERTIFIED MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Mr. Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

Re: Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS)

Phelps Dodge Mining Company (PDMC) has made an application for a sodium carbonate prospecting permit on the following lands in the Las Cruces District Office, Mimbres Resource Area, Hidalgo County:

	Acres
T23S, R20W	
Sec. 14 - all	640
Sec. 23 - all	640
Sec. 13 - N½, SW¼, NW¼SE¼, S½SE¼	600
Sec. 24 - NW¼, S½	480

Sodium carbonate is a commonly used acid neutralization reagent. Sodium carbonate is a common substitute for calcium hydroxide (lime) that is more easily handled and more chemically effective than lime. 7-1 Our information indicates that the prospect permit application area contains natural sodium carbonate that has not been inventoried in the Mimbres Resource Area, according to the August 1991 draft of the Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

To comply with provisions of the Clean Air Act, sulfuric acid plants have been installed on Phelps Dodge smelters in

DIVISION OF PHELPS DODGE CORPORATION

7-1 The area of sodium potential in the Lordsburg Playa has been expanded on the leasable mineral potential map to reflect this new information.

7

Mr. Tim Salt
September 26, 1991
Page 2

New Mexico. Environmental regulations require neutralization of any discharge from these sulfuric acid plants. Sodium carbonate is a mineral that should be available for exploitation in the Mimbres Resource Area for economic and environmental purposes.

7-2 The prospect permit application area may conflict with Alternatives "B" and "D" as listed in table S-2, Summary of Anticipated Impacts (Minerals) of the Draft RMP/EIS. The prospect permit application may also conflict with Alternative "C" of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, as designated on map 2-11.

During the Silver City meeting of September 19, 1991, you requested information on specific conflicts or hardships that the Draft RMP/EIS would bestow on companies or individuals. This letter is intended to comply with your request. Phelps Dodge Corporation requests that you adopt an alternative RMP/EIS that allows for the economic development of sodium carbonate. We also request that you amend the Summary of Anticipated Impacts (Minerals) for each alternative to reflect the economic impact associated with the preclusion of mining for sodium carbonate. 7-3

Very truly yours,

D. P. Milovich

D. P. Milovich
Vice President
New Mexico Operations

DPM/JK:jw

7-2 The prospect permit application does not conflict with Alternative B or the Proposed Plan but it does conflict with Alternative C for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail.

7-3 The Proposed Plan does not conflict with sodium exploration, development, or production in the vicinity of the Lordsburg Playa. The narrative in Chapter 4 and Summary of Anticipated Impacts have been revised to reflect the preclusion of mining for sodium carbonate under Alternative C because of restrictions related to the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail.

8

DRAFT MIMBRES RMP/EIS

COMMENT SHEET

Your comments on the Draft RMP are valuable to us in the decision-making process. You may use this form to comment or you may wish to do so in writing by letter. Your answers to the following questions are appreciated. Please be as specific as you can. If you need additional space for your answers, please continue on another piece of paper.

1. Do you feel that resolution of the Issues and Management Concerns is adequately addressed by the Proposed Action or one of the Alternatives?

STAY with PRESENT plan.

SAVE the TAX payer - your Employer Dollars

2. If not, what actions would you recommend to resolve the Issues and Management Concerns? Please be specific.

Continue with your present policies you know what you have. Emphasize MULTIPLE USE - Its proven and it works - If you are encouraging recreational use then discourage WSA's

Tom McKenna

9

U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Fort Worth Office, Region VI
1600 Throckmorton
P.O. Box 2905
Fort Worth, Texas 76113-2905

OCT 04 1991

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

SUBJECT: Draft Mimbres Resource Management Plan (RMP) and
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

The Draft Mimbres RMP/EIS has been reviewed in the Regional Environmental Office of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (DHUD). The above mentioned documents describe and analyze alternatives for managing and planning public land and resources into a single, unified land use plan in the Mimbres Resource Area, New Mexico.

It has been determined that the DHUD will not have comments on the Draft RMP/EIS, as the undertaking and its impacts do not fall within our particular areas of environmental concerns and/or programs.

We appreciate the opportunity to review the Draft RMP/EIS. If we can be of assistance relative to the above, please call Mr. Xavier Tinajero, Regional Environmental Specialist, at 817/885-5853.

Sincerely,

Sam R. Moseley
Regional Administrator--
Regional Housing Commissioner

10

October 2, 1991

RMP Team Leader
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 8805

Dear Mr. Florence,

I have reviewed the Draft RMP EIS for the Mimbres Resource Area and commend you and your team for producing a high quality document which does a very good job of delineating the plan alternatives.

While I could comment on many aspects of the plan, I would like to limit my remarks in this letter to one concern; the lands proposed for disposal which are located in the triangle of land bounded by U.S. 180, N.M. 61, and N.M. 152 in eastern Grant County. While it is obvious that effective management is difficult with the present land ownership patterns, I feel there are some alternatives to consider other than land disposal.

Three entities control over 80% of the land within this triangle, Phelps Dodge, the State, and the BLM. I feel some creative land exchanges could be developed amongst the three which would improve public land management, develop multiple use opportunities, enhance recreation, and benefit all three parties.

First of all, the Cobre Mountains in the northwest portion of this triangle, adjacent to Bayard and Central and within 10 miles of Silver City, have a high recreation potential to the public in this area, similar to, but on a smaller scale, as the relationship of Las Cruces to the Organ Mountains. Included in this area is the Kneeling Nun scenic vista which I feel was overlooked as a scenic Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). It has significant cultural value to the people of this region and because of its visibility over a wide area it is more than just locally significant. It is certainly irreplaceable and vulnerable to adverse change.

Also within this area is the spectacular waterfall of Lucky Bill canyon. This resource has high public recreation value and the base of the falls has been used historically as a picnic spot by local residents.

10-1 I propose that the BLM look toward land exchanges with the State and Phelps Dodge which would block up public land in this section of the triangle, the spectacular and rugged Cobre Mountains. If this cannot occur in the near future because of incompatibility with ongoing mine operations, I would like to see the BLM lands retained for this possibility to occur in the more distant future.

10-1 While this area does possess recreational and natural resource values, consolidating land in this area is a low priority at this time. Our highest priority at the present is consolidating land in special management areas such as WSAs, ACECs, and the proposed Organ Mountains National Conservation Area. Under the Proposed Plan, the larger parcels of land would be retained and the possibility of a future exchange would not be precluded.

10

10-2 In the southern part of the triangle, we have the City of Rocks state park, the adjacent Table Mountain, the Faywood Hot Spring, and a Nature Conservancy identified endangered plant species with a desert spring in a karst-like depression, a rare geological feature on this side of the Rio Grande. All these resource values would benefit from the blocking of public lands in this area. There is BLM land within a half mile of the City of Rocks state park and state land adjacent to the BLM land and the highway which contains similar rock formations to that found at the City of Rocks. I propose that public lands in this area of the triangle with its high recreational and natural resource values be blocked through exchanges with Phelps Dodge and the State.

10-3 In the eastern part of this triangle, we have the Mimbres River fault zone and its uplift to the west dominated by Mimbres Peak. Of the three principal land owners, Phelps Dodge, the State, and the BLM, the State owns the most acreage so that blocking of State land in this area would involve the least amount of land transfer.

I would think that the above proposals would also have merit for Phelps Dodge as they could acquire State and BLM lands outside of the three areas mentioned above and block up their own private estate for better management and control. Many split estate parcels could also be eliminated.

10-4 I appreciate you considering these comments and trust that I will be informed of any action to dispose of lands within the areas mentioned above. I would also like your consideration of designating the Kneeling Nun as a scenic ACEC.

Sincerely,

Joseph Gendron
District Advisory Board Member
Rte 15, Box 1625
San Lorenzo, NM 88057

copy: Luis Cardoza, Grant County Manager
Zeke Santa Maria, Clerk, City of Bayard
Mark Richard, AIA, Bayard
The Nature Conservancy, Santa Fe

10-2 Again, as with the Cobre Mountain area, acquisition of private land in this area is not a priority and will not be considered at this time. There are several thousand square miles of Forest land nearby that offer exceptional recreational opportunities.

10-3 The State does own most of the land in this area; however, our emphasis on acquiring State trust land will be in ACECs and other special management areas.

10-4 The Kneeling Nun was considered for ACEC potential during the Draft RMP as a result of your comments during the public scoping period. Kneeling Nun was not found to meet the Relevance Criteria listed in Appendix H-1 because it is of mostly local significance and a small feature in a visually disturbed area. The landscape within which the Kneeling Nun exists has been drastically altered from the Tyrone Mine and the Hurley Smelter slag piles. This alteration leaves the feature as a subordinate feature of an extremely altered landscape. Because of the overwhelming dominance of human induced disturbance, the scenic value of the Kneeling Nun is not a significant feature of the landscape. The Kneeling Nun may meet the importance criterion of having qualities or circumstances that make it vulnerable to adverse change, but an area must meet both the relevance and importance criteria to qualify as an ACEC. The area will, however, be retained in public ownership and managed as VRM Class II.

11

2210 S. Valley Dr.
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005
October 24, 1991

RMP Team Leader
BLM Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Dear Sir:

We wish to make the following comments on the Mimbres Resource Area Draft Resource Management Plan.

After reviewing the alternatives for this plan, we prefer Alternative A - No action.

As motorized recreationists we feel the other three alternatives would decrease the number of roads and trails now available to us. We think any road and trail closures, as well as ACEC's, WSA's and other management plans should be done on a one on one basis, on which public hearings should be held at the time they are considered. We feel that these special management areas restrict public acess and multiple use on public lands. We are particularly opposed to the Robledo Mountain and Dona Ana Mountain ACEC's.

Public lands should be open for multiple use for all users, and through the Tread Lightly program and other educational programs, existing roads and trails should be left open for public use.

Sincerely,
Peggy Bogart
Peggy Bogart

11

2210 S. Valley Dr.
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005
October 24, 1991

RMP Team Leader
BLM Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Dear Sir:

We wish to make the following comments on the Mimbres Resource Area Draft Resource Management Plan.

After reviewing the alternatives for this plan, we prefer Alternative A - No action.

As motorized recreationists we feel the other three alternatives would decrease the number of roads and trails now available to us. We think any road and trail closures, as well as ACEC's, WSA's and other management plans should be done on a one on one basis, on which public hearings should be held at the time they are considered. We feel that these special management areas restrict public acess and multiple use on public lands. We are particularly opposed to the Robledo Mountain and Dona Ana Mountain ACEC's.

Public lands should be open for multiple use for all users, and through the Tread Lightly progran and other educational programs, existing roads and trails should be left open for public use.

Sincerely,

Douglas Bogart

11

DRAFT MIMBRES RMP/EIS

COMMENT SHEET

Your comments on the Draft RMP are valuable to us in the decision-making process. You may use this form to comment or you may wish to do so in writing by letter. Your answers to the following questions are appreciated. Please be as specific as you can. If you need additional space for your answers, please continue on another piece of paper.

1. Do you feel that resolution of the Issues and Management Concerns is adequately addressed by the Proposed Action or one of the Alternatives?

Alternative A

2. If not, what actions would you recommend to resolve the Issues and Management Concerns? Please be specific.

see letter

12

RMP Team Leader
BLM Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Sir,

After having read the Draft Mimbres RMP/EIS and attending the public meeting in Silver City on September 19th I feel the need to make a few comments. I'm replying as a representative of the Gila Native Plant Society, a group of approximately 40 environmentally concerned citizens. Overall Isupport Alternative B as the best plan. I know Alternative D is the preferred alternative. It could be acceptable with a few modifications.

My main concerns are with the areas designated as ACEC's. The Gila Native Plant Society has had field trips to many of these areas, such as the Apache Box, Gila Lower Box, Florida mountains, Cooke's Range, etc.

My first concern is for access. I'm supportive of legal access to all ACEC's but not vehicular access to most of these areas. With vehicular access comes a dramatic increase in the amount of traffic and also litter. Most people who make the effort to walk to an area also make the effort to clean up after themselves.

My second concern is for the Big Hatchet ACEC. The Big Hatchets are probably the most scenic and pristine mountain range in southwest New Mexico outside of the Gila National
Forest. If D is the preferred alternative I stongly urge you
12-1 to increase the size of the Big Hatchet ACEC to the full 67,960
acres as in Alternative B. The very best alternative would be
to designate the entire acerage as a Wilderness Area.

Thank you for your considerations.

Sincerely,

Ron Flemke

Ron Flemke
Box 117
Tyrone, NM 88065

12-1 We believe that the boundaries as outlined under the Proposed Plan would protect the most scenic and environmentally sensitive portions of the Big Hatchet Mountains. The RMP does not deal with the issue of wilderness designation; however, this was dealt with in the Statewide wilderness study completed in 1990. This study has been given to Congress for consideration.

13

Mr.Tim Salt
Bureau of Land Management, Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Mr. Salt,

13-1 I am writing today to express my concern at the lack of attention your department appears to be placing on the Continental Divide Trail, in the BLM's Mimbres Resource Area. While your plan as I understand it shows several proposed trails on a map, no discussion of the merits of each can be found. In addition their appears to be a complete lack of any reasoned application of the criteria in the CDNST comprehensive plan.

In 1990 I hiked the length of the Continental Divide trail starting in Antelope Wells. I found the entire state of New Mexico lacking in the markings and definitions of what has been declared by Congress a National Scenic Trail. I would like to obtain a copy of the proposed resource plan for further comment. I would also like to thank you for your work on this difficult project.

Sincerely,

Stephen Capra
399 Dolores Street
San Francisco, Ca 94110

13-1 The summary sent to most people on the mailing list was very brief in its description of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail Route Alternatives. While the Draft RMP maps showed a more complete picture by accurately depicting the alternative routes, a direct comparison of the merits of alternative routes was not included. Route analysis focused more on benefits of a trail route on recreation opportunities by alternative as compared to the existing situation. The alternative routes used the location criteria from the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail Comprehensive Plan, and the route identified in the Proposed Plan is the one that most closely meets the criteria. A comparison has been included in Appendix H-2 for your reference.

14

October 30, 1991

Mr. Tim Salt, Mimbres Resource Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Las Cruces District Office
1800 Marquess St.
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

The Friends of the Organ Mountains, an incorporated citizens group, dedicated to the preservation and protection of the Organ and Franklin Mountains as Wilderness, and to sponsor forums on the meaning and need for roadless Wilderness, wishes to make the following statement on the Draft Mimbres Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

Since the Organ and Franklin Mountains are part of the same ecological unit, The Friends of the Organ Mountains fully supports the position of the Franklin Mountains Wilderness Group regarding the Franklin Mountains.

More specifically, in New Mexico we support the
14-1 New Mexico Wilderness Coalition position of Wilderness for the Organ Mountain chain to the Texas border to connect with the Franklin Mountain Wilderness. We support acquisition of all lands necessary to make this plan a reality. We would support the Organ/Franklin Mountain ACEC if it was wholly contained within Wilderness Status.
14-2 The two tracks between Pena Blanca and the private land near Soledad Canyon should be closed. We also support closing the area to locatable mineral entry as well as other explоitive intrusions.

We believe we must get serious about protecting the Organ/Franklin Mountain chain NOW - before it is too late. This can best be done by implementing the New Mexico Wilderness Coalition proposal for this chain.

Most Sincerely,

Marianne H. Thaeler
Marianne H. Thaeler
President
Friends of the Organ Mountains
2015 Huntington Dr.
Las Cruces, NM, 88001

14-1 The New Mexico Wilderness Coalition proposed boundary for the Organ Mountains Wilderness does not go south to the Texas State Line, but ends at Bishop's Cap. The area between Peña Blanca and the Texas State line does not meet the roadless and natural criteria that the BLM adheres to in the Wilderness Inventory process. Roads including State Road 404, mines, power lines, and housing developments exist in that portion of the Organ/Franklin corridor, leaving the area unnatural and disqualifying it from wilderness study.

14-2 The road from Peña Blanca to the private land in the vicinity of Barr Canyon provides the only vehicular access to a large area of the west side of the Organs. In the public scoping meetings, as well as during the preparation of the Organ Mountains Coordinated Resource Management Plan, this route was identified by vehicle recreationists as one of the preeminent recreational driving routes in the Organ Mountains and the Mimbres Resource Area. This route also provides access to and across private land, and attempted closure of this route would lead to access problems for private landowners.

15

PERMITS WEST, INC.
PROVIDING PERMITS for the ENERGY INDUSTRY
37 Verano Loop, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505 (505) 984-8120

October 30, 1991

Tim Salt, Area Manager
BLM - Mimbres RA
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

I have read the Mimbres RA Draft RMP/EIS, prefer Alternate C, and have the following comments.

15-1 Page 2-3: Revise the last sentence of the left hand column. Geophysical exploration can, and often must, occur off of existing roads and trails.

15-2 Pages 4-19, 4-43, 4-73, & 4-101 are far too brief in their discussion of impacts on oil and gas. How many wells, jobs, revenues, etc. will be impacted by each alternative?

Appendix H:

15-3 a) Provide individual ACEC maps. Your 12 mi. = 1" maps provide inadequate detail. The Rio Puerco and Farmington RMPs have much better maps.

15-4 b) The narratives also vary widely among ACECs as far as detail. While few would argue with the significance of the Trackways ACEC, do we really need to know the day BLM issued a permit? At the opposite end of the spectrum is a two paragraph description of a 26,000 acre ACEC.

15-5 c) The wildly divergent narratives and inadequate maps make it very difficult to assess ACEC designations. I prefer "no surface occupancy" oil and gas leases to "no leasing" in many of the ACECs, but cannot be more specific given the RMP's ambiguity. There are simply too many acres at stake to accept the RMP in its present format.

15-6 d) There should be a written commitment to allow ROWs to perpendicularly cross the Butterfield and Divide Trails. Likewise, there should be a written commitment to shrink the NSO buffer in those cases where terrain or other features screen the trail.

15-7 e) How well known and defined is the location of the Butterfield Trail? Is it a 50' wide corridor, or a mile plus wide series of parallel tracks? Impacts on public land users could vary widely.

15-8 f) The ACECs appear to be quasi-wilderness areas. You must provide more detail given the number of acres and distribution of the ACECs. The public can then make better judgements between total use and total protection.

15-1 It is Mimbres Resource Area policy not to allow surface-disturbing types of geophysical exploration other than on existing roads and trails.

15-2 The potential for significant occurrences of oil and gas is not high throughout the Resource Area. Areas proposed as closed to fluid leasing have low to moderate potential. It is not believed that closure of any of these areas would have a significant impact on fluid mineral resources, or the jobs and revenues that could be generated by exploration and development activities.

15-3 We have added individual, more detailed maps of most ACECs in Appendix H.

15-4 The variation in narratives for each ACEC is due to the variation in complexity of individual ACECs, which is not necessarily related to size. Some ACECs have been proposed to protect a single significant resource value. Others have been proposed to protect as many as five significant resource values. In some cases, because of the need to protect sensitive archaeological values or special status species, specific information (such as exact locations or species involved) cannot be made public.

15-5 The "no surface occupancy" stipulation was used for small ACECs. For all practical purposes, use of this stipulation for large areas creates a defacto closure of the area to leasing.

15-6 The Butterfield Trail and Continental Divide National Scenic Trail are proposed as right-of-way avoidance areas. Because these trails dissect the Resource Area both longitudinally and latitudinally, it would be impractical to completely exclude these trail corridors from new right-of-way development. The definition of avoidance areas in the Glossary states that these are areas where future rights-of-way may be granted only when no feasible alternative route or designated right-of-way corridor is available, and that special terms and conditions may be required. It is likely that there will be new rights-of-way issued that will cross these trails. These rights-of-way will likely be limited to crossing the trails at perpendicular angles instead of oblique angles that would increase the impacts on the trail corridors. However, it would also be impractical to try to shrink these corridors where terrain or other features screen the trails because of the open nature of the terrain along these trails. Specific opportunities to use such screening would be issued on a case-by-case basis if such screening proved to be the best alternative after analysis in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement.

15-7 The BLM has recently written a Cultural Resource Management Plan for future management of the Butterfield Trail in New Mexico. This plan calls for an archaeological survey of the trail. A contract for this survey will probably be awarded in FY 1992 OR FY 1993. This survey will determine the width and exact location of the trail. The survey will also evaluate the condition of the trail and research potential of features along the trail.

Interim management of the trail is based on the location as shown on U.S. Geological Survey topographic maps with an estimated width of less than 1/8 mile.

15-8 An Area of Critical Environmental Concern is not a quasi-wilderness area, although there may be similar management objectives based on the reason for ACEC designation. Areas of Critical Environmental Concern have been recommended on the basis of important scenic, cultural, or biological values while Wilderness Study Areas and Wilderness Areas are designated for large, natural roadless areas. Obviously, there can be overlap of outstanding scenic, cultural, or biological values with large, natural, roadless areas. A comparison of the maps will show that many of the proposed ACECs are in WSAs, but the ACECs are smaller. Furthermore, not all WSAs are proposed as ACECs. An example is the West Potrillo Mountains WSA which is the largest WSA in New Mexico and has been recommended as suitable for wilderness designation by the BLM. The West Potrillos are a large, natural roadless area that do not meet the relevance and importance criteria for ACEC consideration. Both ACECs and wilderness areas can be used for certain types of commodity production. Special management needs of individual ACECs are detailed in Appendix H-l.

15

Appendix L: There are ≈85 plants listed. The combination of bad science, inadequate data, species hybridization, and federal and state listed and candidate species have unlimited potential for stopping all public land use.
15-9 Please publish any MOUs and explicitly state BLM's policy for protecting the various categories of species.

Please send me a revised RMP/EIS.

Sincerely,

Brian Wood

Brian Wood

PERMITS WEST, INC.
PROVIDING PERMITS for the ENERGY INDUSTRY

15-9 BLM policy on the protection and enhancement of endangered, threatened, candidate and sensitive species is discussed on pages 2-34 and 3-20. BLM is mandated to conserve, protect, and recover threatened and endangered species according to the Endangered Species Act of 1973. Species proposed for listing and their habitat shall be managed with the same level of protection as listed species. Candidate species shall be managed to prevent them from becoming listed as threatened or endangered. State laws protecting State-listed species apply to all BLM programs and actions to the extent they are consistent with FLPMA and other Federal laws. There are no MOUs with the State or Federal agencies.

16

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 6
1445 ROSS AVENUE SUITE 1200
DALLAS TEXAS 75202 2733

NOV 01 1991

Mr. Robert R. Calkins
Acting District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Las Cruces District Office
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Dear Mr. Calkins:

In accordance with our responsibilities under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations, the Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Mimbres Resource Area in New Mexico.

The Draft EIS identifies and evaluates future options for managing the public land and Federal mineral estate in the resource area. In addition to the no action (current management) alternative, the Draft EIS considers three alternatives including resource preservation, resource production and resource conservation. The resource conservation alternative is identified as the preferred alternative.

The Draft RMP/EIS is a 20-year general management guidance document. Detailed impact evaluations for specific projects in the resource area are not included. However, the Draft EIS indicates that activity plans detailing environmental information and analyses will be provided. We encourage your agency to develop environmental assessments (EA) for the specific projects and circulate these EAs for public and agency comment. It would also be helpful if the Final EIS includes additional information detailing when and how assessments will be prepared. 16-1

We classify your Draft EIS as Lack of Objection (LO). Specifically, we have no objections to the preferred alternative. Our classification will be published in the Federal Register according to our responsibility to inform the public of our views on proposed Federal actions, under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

16-1 Site-specific environmental analyses will be conducted for specific projects proposed in the Mimbres RMP. Consultation and coordination with appropriate agencies, organizations, and individuals will be an integral part of the process. The Environmental Assessments (EAs) will be available for public and agency review.

Additional information on when and how EAs will be prepared has been added to the Final (see Final page 4-1).

16

We appreciate the opportunity to review the Draft EIS. Please send our office one copy of the Final EIS at the same time it is sent to the Office of Federal Activities, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 401 M Street S.W., Washington, D.C. 20460.

Sincerely yours,

Robert E. Layton Jr., P.E.
Regional Administrator

17

November 12, 1991

Attn: Scott Florence - Team Leader
Bureau of Land Management
Las Cruces District Office
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Re: Mimbres Resource Management Plan (RMP)

Dear Mr. Florence:

Please accept this letter as my protest of the proposed Alternatives B, C & D under the above RMP. I oppose any acquisitions of privately-owned lands by the BLM which would not only increase federal spending but also increase federal control of land use in Luna County or which would decrease animal units for grazing. 17-1 I further oppose any designations of any ACEC's without a specific indication of where the ACEC will be and the specific reason for such location and designation and without full consideration of the economic impact. And finally, I oppose any further restrictions on access to federal land in Luna County and generally support the Interim Land Use Policy Luna County has recently adopted.

Sincerely,

Gary Jeffreys
P. O. Drawer 1559
Deming, NM 88031-1559

17-1 The specific location of each ACEC is shown on individual maps contained in Appendix H. The specific reason for each ACEC is contained in the "General Description" and "Management Goals" sections for each area in Appendix H. The environmental and economic impacts associated with the designation of each ACEC are outlined in Chapter 4.

18

Zeno W. Wicks Jr.
1345 Branson Avenue 4C
Las Cruces, NM 88001
(505) 522 3851

November 8, 1991

Mr. Scott Florence
Bureau of Land Management - Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Scott,

I have read most of your RMP for the Mimbres Resource Area; it is certainly an impressive effort to identify needs for future operations. In my mind of the four alternatives, Alternative B is the only one worthy of serious consideration.

I have some specific comments on ACEC's that I have visited
that I would suggest to strengthen the plan. In the Ice Canyon
18-1 ACEC, it seems to me there should be a ban on swimming and wading
in the old reservoir; there is a sizeable population of Organ
Mountain Evening Primrose which is endangered by people getting
18-2 down to the water to swim. In the Aden Lava flow area, there is
serious overgrazing and urgent need to reduce or eliminate
grazing. There is need to further protect the Kilbourne Crater
beyond your plan. People pick up the volcanic bombs with the
18-3 olivine crystals inside. Unfortunately I don't really know how
you can stop them. Signs explaining the problem and prohibiting
taking of souvenirs might help but I suppose that they might
merely call attention of souvenir hunters to what they might find
and make the problem worse. In the Cowboy Spring ACEC, I was
disturbed to see that current livestock grazing practices are to
18-4 be maintained -- this area is heavily grazed now and grazing
should be limited or eliminated. Also in Box Canyon,
18-5 continuation of existing livestock grazing will frustrate your
efforts to reestablish cottonwood trees in the canyon bottom.

In general terms, as one drives around southern New Mexico, it is evident that some few cattle ranchers are relatively careful stewards of the land and others apparently don't care what happens to the land. I would hope that somehow a mechanism could be found to encourage the good ranchers and to close down those ranching operations that are degrading public lands. The BLM is faced with pressures from many sides and this plan is certainly an indication that the BLM is now considering needs beyond those of the cattle growers, miners, and off the road vehicle users. I hope you will be able to withstand their pressure and adopt a strengthened version of Alternative B.

Sincerely yours,

Zeno W. Wicks Jr.

Zeno W. Wicks Jr.

1

18-1 A monitoring plan, incorporating the concepts of Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC), is currently being developed for the area. If monitoring indicates a need for further restriction on visitor use in this area, it would be done before unacceptable changes occur.

18-2 The Aden Lava Flow is contained within the Afton Allotment No. 03056. This allotment is in the I category and has been intensively monitored for the last 9 years. Utilization levels have not exceeded the moderate or 50 percent use level during this period and during most years were between the light (or 30 percent use level) and moderate use levels.

18-3 This will be given careful consideration in any interpretive signing that is developed for the area.

18-4 The Cowboy Spring ACEC is contained within two allotments, the Herbert Young Allotment No. 01073 and Timberlake Allotment No. 01066 with the base property leased to the Gray Ranch by The Nature Conservancy. During wilderness monitoring of the Cowboy Spring WSA and the intensive monitoring being done on the Young Allotment, use levels have stayed well within the acceptable levels of 50 percent for the area. The Young Allotment has always been within light use (21 percent-40 percent) levels. The Timberlake Allotment has had short periods of moderate to heavy use followed by a growing season's rest.

18-5 The Box Canyon area is contained within the Picacho Peak Allotment No. 03008. This allotment had a Grazing Activity Plan approved in September 1991. Under this plan, the Box Canyon area (or south pasture) will be grazed from mid-November to mid-April (non-growing season) for the next 4 years (1992-1995). The permittee has been operating under this schedule since 1989. For the following 4 years (1996-1999), a part of this area will be grazed during the growing season. At the end of 8 years, the plan will be evaluated to determine the need for any changes in the grazing system. For 6 to 8 weeks each year, while in the south pasture, the permittee's cattle graze on private land. This plan was developed taking cottonwood regeneration into consideration.

19

NEW MEXICO
LAND USE ALLIANCE
Public Lands For Multiple Use
POB 1556, Silver City, N.M.,88062

November 6, 1991

Re: Draft Mimbres
RMP/EIS; August 1991.

Cert.: P 065 824 510

Bureau of Land Management
RMP Team Leader
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marques
Las Cruces, N.M., 88005

Dear Team Leader:

You have requested written comments on the Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement published August, 1991, by the BLM Las Cruces District Office for the Mimbres Resource Area; (FR Vol. 56, No. 161, August 20, 1991; 41370-41374).

These comments apply specifically to the 23 new Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) and the expansion in size or use limitations of four existing ACECs; also to four blocks of public land being considered for possible wilderness designation, and to segments of the Gila River inventoried for Wild, Scenic and Recreational River values.

Obviously the development of your Draft RMP/EIS required the commitment of extensive time and effort on the part of your considerable staff of specialists over a greater period of time than is available to those of us who wish to comment as to the final product; therefore, of necessity, some of the New Mexico Land Use Alliance (Alliance) comments must serve to cover the overall Draft RMP/EIS in somewhat general terms. Specific comments will be furnished for each of the management proposals later, as they are identified in the FR notice.

19-1 1. The proposed ACEC designations for current Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) is obviously designed to "protect" those specific areas in the event the WSAs are not included in the proposed New Mexico Wilderness Bill for designation as Wilderness.

19-2 2. The ACEC proposals for these WSAs, in essence, recognize the non-comforming nature of these specific WSAs under wilderness criteria; and in most cases, the acreages proposed far exceed the need for protection of the features or whatever is proposed for "protection".

19-1 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern are designated based on the relevance and importance criteria listed in Appendix H-1. The ACEC proposals are based on the merits of public lands without regard to other designations such as Wilderness Study Areas, Outstanding Natural Areas, etc. Also refer to responses LO3-4 and 15-8.

19-2 The ACEC proposals do not recognize nonconforming natures of WSAs because WSAs and ACECs are different designations made for different reasons. All of the WSAs in the Resource Area meet the requirements for WSA status by being at least 5,000 roadless acres or sufficient size to manage as wilderness and having outstanding opportunities for primitive or unconfined types of recreation or other supplemental values. We did not revisit existing wilderness study recommendations and decisions.

19

BLM, RMP Team Leader.....2 November 6, 1991

19-3 3. The proposed interim management of existing WSAs is deemed unnecessary (except for a portion of the Organ Mtns. WSA; NM-030-074) due (1) to the non-conforming nature of most of the WSAs, and (2) that the special features of those WSAs that may marginally conform to wilderness criteria are more than adequately represented and protected in other wilderness areas or protected zones elsewhere in the State.

Note: See the New Mexico Land Use Alliance BLM Wilderness Review (AWR) unedited draft (February, 1989; Rev. 7/89) which is included herewith as a part of these Alliance comments, and which adequately outline the non-conforming characteristics of each of the WSAs under review here.

4. The proposed land ownership adjustments are onerous and unnecessary in view of our previous comments above, particularly in a State currently under siege for converting private land into "public" land with restrictions upon land use; and therefore, the expenditures necessary for these acquisitions are not warranted under the circumstances.

5. The proposed addition of new WSAs is opposed for the same basic reasons expressed in No. 4, above.

6. The proposed closure of vast acreage to mineral material disposal treats too lightly the commercial potential for these areas, as was the case in the prior BLM Wilderness EIS proposals.

7. The proposed management with proscriptions for eleven cultural and paleontological ACECs is excessive in scope and as to need. Alternate A is adequate with the possible addition of the Butterfield Trail in the Cook's Range, including Fort Cummings and the Frying Pan Canyon petroglyphs, as a monument or protected area. The Pony Hill petroglyphs could also be included in this project.

8. Watershed management plans, including T & E recovery plans, are already in process or in place for the lower Gila River in New Mexico. Further emphasis in this regard, and proposal for the Wild and Scenic River Studies on the Gila seem to suggest a different agenda.

19-3 Interim management of WSAs is necessary as outlined in H-8550-1, the Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review. Each WSA meets the criteria for wilderness study as detailed in the existing series of wilderness Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Statements. Special features are not requisite for an area being a WSA, but many of the existing WSAs have outstanding special features. Also, wilderness values in many of these areas are unique, and are not currently well represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System in New Mexico.

19

9. The proposal to secure instream flows, in the future, in the Gila Lower and Middle Box ACECs again suggests another agenda, which ignores the farming, ranching and mining interests along that stretch of river, as well as the State's right to 18,000 acre feet of water from that river flow, that must still be obtained.

10. Proposals for management of riparian areas above present levels and for the elimination of livestock grazing are not supported, and another agenda seems to be in evidence here as well.

11. From our own personal observations, the need to continue chemical land treatments is in order; and more emphasis is needed for scheduling treatment of Broom Snakeweed, in particular.

AREAS FOR WILDERNESS CONSIDERATION

1. Apache Box (6,229 acres)

This location is considered by many to be one of the most highly mineralized areas in the State; and some potential for tin exploration and development has been suggested. Moreover, the Nature Conservancy has been acquiring private land in this site location, with restrictions on land use resulting.

The Apache Box was originally dropped as a WSA in New Mexico due to size criteria and multiple land ownerships. It should not be given new life now for these same reasons and in consideration of its mineral potential.

2. Gray Peak (15,878 acres)

The entire bootheel section, according to sources in the NM Bureau of Mines has considerable potential for oil and gas development (overthrust type belt), in addition to further minerals development potential. Therefore, any proposal for WSA or ACEC consideration is not justified. Moreover, we understand the area was earlier dropped from consideration in the original BLM Wilderness proposal for New Mexico. 19-4

3. Organ Needles (7,604 acres)
4. Pena Blanca (4,441 acres)

The Alliance has supported wilderness designation for a portion of the Organ Mtns, with ACEC protection for some of the area, which seems adequate; see AWR Index No. 42 for the Alliance position.

19-4 Although there is moderate potential for occurrence of oil and gas in the Pedregosa Basin overthrust belt in Hidalgo County, there is low potential for occurrence of oil and gas or locatable minerals in the Gray Peak WSA (please compare Map 2-6 with Maps 3-1 and 3-2). A 5,600-acre portion of the Peloncillo Mountains, known as the Rodeo Inventory Unit was examined through the initial wilderness inventory in 1979 and dropped from wilderness consideration in 1980. Land exchanges in the area have created a block of public land that was not previously inventoried. This 18,600-acre block included the former Rodeo Inventory Unit, and the current inventory found a roadless unit of 14,678 acres.

19

BLM,RMP Team Leader.....4 November 6, 1991

WILD AND SCENIC RIVER STUDIES (PROPOSED)

The Gila River from the Arizona border to the Forest Service boundary
in the Burro Mtns. has been inventoried and proposed for this
designation with particular emphasis given to the Lower and Middle
Boxes. The latter two areas were previously designated as WSAs,
the Lower Box by the BLM and the Middle Box by a private coalition
group. The current BLM RMP/EIS proposed a major area of the
Lower Box WSA for ACEC management and an addition to the current
ACEC area in the Middle Box. This borders on overkill when adding
19-5 the requested Wild and Scenic River designation for the same area
with a request for stream flow requirements for the identical
stretch of river.

19-6 All of these proposals ignore the farming, ranching and
mining interests along that stretch of river, as well as the
State's right to 18,000 acre feet of water from the Gila River,
that must still be obtained; see also AWR report Indexes No.'s
39, 40 and 41 for the balance of the Alliance position on this
river area.

AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN (PROPOSED)

The following comments refer to potential ACECs proposed for designation in preferred BLM alternatives.

1. Aden Lava Flow (26,250 acres)

Presumably, this ACEC proposal covers the entire area already classified as a WSA, and it should be noted that 4,000 acres is already being managed as a Research Natural Area (RNA), which in and of itself is excessive in view of the criteria for RNA management. Moreover, it is our understanding that the "features" could be protected with the designation of three RNAs of approximately 100 acres each, instead of the original designation of 4,000 acres.

It is still the Alliance position that any special features not under RNA management could be given ACEC or other special management; but certainly the current ACEC proposal far exceeds any such need. In addition, there are other considerations, such as oil and gas potential, that cannot be overlooked. Please review the Alliance AWR report (Index No.47) for the balance of our comments on this proposal.

19-5 Different designations can be proposed or made on a single area because of different resource values. Please refer to response LO3-4, and Appendices H and I. The Bureau of Land Management is directed by laws, regulations, and policies to conduct inventories of lands under BLM administration and to make recommendations or designations for a diversity of special resource values. These values may overlap as they do in the case of the Gila Lower Box.

19-6 Please refer to response 19-5. The Bureau is responsible and accountable for making recommendations and designations that will protect sensitive resources on the public lands. In the case of the Gila Lower Box, several designations may overlap. These recommendations and proposals are analyzed for their effects on all resources through Environmental Assessments or Environmental Impact Statements. The existing New Mexico Statewide Wilderness Study Environmental Impact Statement analyzed the effects of wilderness designation on other resources in the Gila Lower Box. The Mimbres RMP/EIS analyzes the effects of ACEC designation on other resources, and the effects of wild, scenic, or recreational river designation of the Gila will be analyzed in a subsequent legislative EIS.

The existing ACEC and current proposal for management of public land along the Gila River will not adversely affect farming, ranching, mining interests or existing water rights.

19

2. Alamo Hueco Mtns. (16,260)

This ACEC proposal includes the entire area previously proposed for WSA designation by a private group but which was not offered as such by the BLM. The Alliance AWR report (Index No.33) had proposed ACEC management for some of this WSA with the balance of the area remaining in the multiple use category; however, this new proposal far exceeds the need to protect any "outstanding" features. Please note the Alliance AWR report (Index No. 33) for the balance of our position on this ACEC proposal.

3. Antelope Pass (8,710)

This ACEC is in an area with at least moderate locatable minerals potential and with oil and gas commercial development potential as well, which should not be overlooked. Moreover, the continued pressure to expand wilderness and restricted area management of public lands, with acquisition of private land in some cases, cannot be condoned in today's environment, particularly when minerals, oil and gas potentials are involved. It seems that this is another case of that type of expansion management syndrome, since the site was not even considered for WSA designation in the first go-around.

4. Apache Box (2,630 acres)

Without time for further research and from your maps provided (2-26 and 2-12) it appears that this ACEC is a part of the area also proposed for wilderness consideration; therefore, Alliance comments for the latter proposal apply equally to the ACEC proposal. In any event, no BLM proposal should ignore the minerals potential for this highly mineralized area.

5. Bear Creek (1,480 acres)

19-7 ACEC management of a portion of Bear Creek would not seem unreasonable if conditions warrant; however, use restrictions appear to be unreasonable if all access and water accessibility for livestock is to be restricted.

6. Big Hatchet Mtns. (47,180)

This proposed ACEC is assumed to be included in the original BLM wilderness proposal, with a WSA of 51,980 acres; and this WSA is covered in great detail in the Alliance AWR report (Index No.34), which should be considered as a part of our comments on this ACEC proposal.

19-7 If the Bear Creek area was fenced to exclude livestock grazing, additional permanent water would be made available (if needed) in the surrounding area for livestock.

19

In summary to that information, there is presently no legal access to the Big Hatchet Mtns. WSA. It contains numerous and significant intrusions that severely compromise its naturalness, etc.; and a WNMU biologist has described the WSA as having very little species diversity and very little water.

The NM Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources considers the entire bootheel area, including the Big Hatchets, to have great potential for commercial exploration and development of mineral, oil and gas resources.

It seems obvious that the WSA area should not be considered for ACEC management for all of the reasons expressed; and certainly it would not justify the use of the entire WSA area for ACEC management.

7. Box Canyon (600 acres)

ACEC management of this site seems reasonable if conditions warrant; ie. so long as use restrictions are not unreasonable. (See No. 5 above).

19-8

8. Central Peloncillo Mtns. (12,750 acres)

Additional ACEC management protection requirements are not documented; and the expansion of the current 3,740 acre ACEC area is suspect since the Central Peloncillo Mtns. were not even proposed as a WSA until this current RMP/EIS; and this ACEC appears to quadruple the current area; ie. more overkill, or at least recognition that the upper two-thirds of the ACEC is actually devoid of unique or truly "special" features. Again, if this area is so special, why wasn't the entire area proposed for wilderness in the original go-around?

9. Cooke's Range (23,160 acres)

The BLM dropped this area from wilderness consideration; although the area was proposed by a public coalition (23,848 acres) for inclusion in the NM Wilderness Bill. The Alliance comments to the WSA proposal are presented in its AWR report (Index No. 36) which are also appropriate here with respect to the current ACEC proposal. In addition you should note that we have made a recommendation, above, to have a portion of the Butterfield Trail along with old Fort Cummings and two petroglyph sites protected for use as a public monument.

19-8 Gray Peak is now proposed as a Wilderness Study Area (WSA) because the BLM has consolidated land ownership in the area through exchange, creating a block of 15,878 contiguous roadless acres of public land that were not previously studied for wilderness potential. The area meets the criteria for a WSA, and also has outstanding scenic, biological, and cultural resource values. Appendix I-3 details the potential wilderness values of the Gray Peak WSA.

The Public Land User's Alliance booklet suggests that ACEC designation provides adequate protection of public land, and supports the ACEC concept as an alternative to wilderness designation. The proposed ACEC is independent of the WSA as evidenced by the boundary difference. It also considers additional land outside the existing ACEC because of BLM acquisitions in the area, and is being proposed because it meets the relevance and importance criteria as detailed in Appendix H. The unique qualities of the proposed Central Peloncillo ACEC include biological and scenic values as detailed in Appendix H. This portion of the Peloncillo Mountains provides a natural passage for unique wildlife from Mexico to the U.S. It also provides Madrean woodland and other habitats for State-listed endangered species including desert bighorn sheep, which is a priority wildlife species for the BLM.

19

10. Cowboy Spring (6,740 acres)

This ACEC was also proposed for wilderness designation by the BLM to be included in the NM Wilderness Bill; see Alliance AWR report (Index No. 37), which is herewith included as a part of our comments pertaining to this ACEC proposal. However, it should be noted that earlier BLM EIS drafts had proposed RNA management for only the "unique vegetation and wildlife associated with the Madrean woodland." This inconsistency is disturbing, and it appears that the BLM specialist will attempt to control the area under whatever concept can be sold to the public or to Congress. 19-9

11. Dona Ana Mtns (1490 acres)

This ACEC proposal involves an area with minerals, and oil and gas potential; and this potential must not be treated lightly.

12. Florida Mtns (22,360 acres)

This area was proposed for Wilderness designation by a public coalition group; but was dropped from consideration by the BLM; and the BLM rejected ACEC management of certain visual resources and for Southwestern Barrel Cactus because of non-Federal ownership lands in the area and due to access problems. Other comments are included in the Alliance AWR report (Index No. 38).

13. Gila Lower Box (6,490 acres)

This ACEC area was included by the BLM in the original Wilderness Bill proposal; see Alliance AWR report, Index No. 40, which is to be considered as a part of these comments on the current ACEC proposal. Moreover, it should be noted that the original BLM EIS draft of May, 1985, had proposed an alternative to Wilderness with the management of 2,469 acres of riparian area as an ACEC; ie. recognizing that the remaining acreage in the WSA is dominated by creosote bush with the characteristic erosion associated with this growth prevalent throughout the remaining portion of the unit. Numerous appurtenances have been documented. 19-10

In addition, this is a WSA with a major water issue: There is an 18,000 acre foot State water right to flood waters that remains to be excised in some manner.

19-9 This WSA has been recommended as suitable for Wilderness designation by the BLM, the Secretary of the Interior, and the President. In this RMP, we did not revisit existing wilderness decisions. It contains significant wilderness values as documented in the BLM's New Mexico Statewide Wilderness Study Environmental Impact Statement. The unique biota of the area enhances wilderness values, but it is the size and naturalness of the area that qualify it for wilderness. In response to the Public Land User's Alliance BLM Wilderness Review, research is a valid use of wilderness. This WSA is scheduled to receive a long-term climate study site as part of the Intermountain Wilderness Area Ecological Studies program. Although the area is located in the Pedregosa Basin overthrust belt, which has moderate potential for location of oil and gas deposits, the WSA has low potential for oil and gas, which would more likely be found and more economically developed on the nearby desert flats. There are no known commercially viable oil and gas reserves in the vicinity of the Cowboy Spring WSA. Likewise, there are no known commercial deposits of locatable minerals in the Cowboy Spring WSA. We do not believe that designation of this area as wilderness will create or compound law enforcement or public safety issues. The Cowboy Spring WSA represents an ecosystem that is poorly represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System and is unrepresented in the system in New Mexico.

Wilderness and ACEC values are not synonymous, but there is often overlap. Earlier proposals for RNA management of the unique vegetation in the Cowboy Spring area do not reflect the dynamic nature of public land management. As new information is generated during inventories and studies, we will consider that new information in our planning and all relevant information will be used in making management decisions. In this case, we have found that the area supports State-listed endangered species that were not previously known and considered in planning processes. The proposed Cowboy Spring ACEC meets the relevance and importance criteria in Appendix H by providing habitat for the diverse fauna and flora of the Mexican highlands, and supporting unique biota that is more than locally significant.

19-10 In this RMP, we did not revisit existing wilderness decisions. The Gila Lower Box has been proposed for wilderness. It also meets the relevance and importance criteria for potential ACEC designation. The Gila supports the most significant riparian community on public land in southwestern New Mexico, including 11 State or Federally-listed endangered species. It is a highly scenic area as well. The proposed increase in size for this ACEC is due to the addition of adjacent riparian habitat. This additional habitat includes lower Blue Creek and portions of other small drainages and watersheds near the riparian areas.

14. Gila Middle Box (840 acres)

This existing ACEC has additional use restrictions imposed; therefore, we ask that you refer to the Alliance AWR report (Index No. 41) for our comments which are to apply to this ACEC proposal as well.

15. Granite Gap (1750 acres)

This area was dropped from BLM wilderness (WSA) consideration in 1980; although there may have been some features worth protecting. However, considering that the sights and noises from the Playas Smelter dominate the landscape, and it probably contributes to at least a minor amount of polution, the designation of even a small portion of the WSA as an ACEC is probably of questionable value; See Alliance AWR report (Index No. 51.).

16. Guadalupe Canyon (4,170 acres)

We must assume this ACEC was included in the original public coalition WSA proposal; see Alliance AWR report (Index No. 52). The current ACEC proposal tracks the previous Forest Service reported need which was to intensify wildlife management.

17. Kilbourne Hole (5,480 acres)

This ACEC is located generally within the center of the joint West Potrillo Mtns. and Mount Riley WSA and the Aden Lava Flow WSA; see the Alliance AWR report, index No.'s 45 and 46, plus Index No. 47, respectively.

This proposal again raises questions as to the quality of the WSAs for conforming to wilderness criteria, as was outlined in the Alliance AWR report. Moreover, the "feature" is merely a depression, and would not be significant to anyone except a geologist; therefore the basis for the ACEC proposal and need for protection is tenuous at best.

We note the area has previously been designated as a National Natural Monument.

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18. Lordsburg Playa (4,510 acres)

Basis for this ACEC proposal is again in question due to the nature of the area which in and of itself, seems impossible of management per se, or in the true sense; ie. except that which is possible by nature, which is considerable in terms of its ability to modify the landscape and to change the ecology, even to obliterate the intrusions by man from time to time.

19. Los Tules (20 acres)

This ACEC proposal should not have any significant impact, so long as there are no restrictions on access into adjacent areas.

20. Northern Peloncillo Mtns. (760 acres)

There appear to be no significant problems with this ACEC proposal, so long as there are no access problems created by the project. There have been two fairly recent sightings of Mexican gray wolves in the general area.

21. Old Town (320 acres)

This Mimbres Indian ruin site has been included in the proposed Mimbres Culture National Monument Bill, as a "protected" site, to be administered by the National Park Service.

22. Organ/Franklin Mtns. (56,480)

The proposed expansion of the current 8,840 acre ACEC is not supported as to need or special features and the total acreage proposed is considered exorbitant for ACEC management, control and in the level of restrictions to be imposed. Moreover, this appears to be merely another method to control the original WSA area proposed for the NM Wilderness Bill by whatever method can be sold to either the general public or to the Congress; See Alliance AWR report, Index No. 42.

23. Paleozoic Trackways (720 acres)

This seems to be a portion of or an attachment to the original Robledo Mtns.WSA and the current Robledo ACEC, or at least an extension to those two areas. In any event, the proposed area seems to be subject to some type of protection.

24. Rincon (840 acres)

This ACEC proposal appears to impact upon an area with some locatable minerals potential, although the size of the ACEC may not be significant so long as the site does not create access problems into adjacent areas.

25. Robledo Mtns. (13,070 acres)

This seems to be the identical area recommended by a public coalition group for Wilderness designation, although it was not supported by the BLM; see Alliance AWR report (Index no. 43).

Essentially, the BLM had considered the wilderness value of the Robledo Mtns. to be "marginal", and an outside study found the WSA to be extremely barren with sparse, scrubby vegetation (mostly creosote bush), with little or no surface water, and a paucity of esthetically appealing scenery. Your review of Index No. 43 should be enlightening, and will not confirm your basis for the ACEC proposal.

26. San Diego Mtns. (640 acres)

The ACEC designation seems appropriate if conditions warrant; ie. so long as there are no access problems for adjacent areas.

27. Uvas Valley (2,210 acres)

Actual basis for this ACEC is not provided here; therefore, formal comment is not possible at this time, except to state that access to other adjacent areas must not be restricted by the ACEC land area.

POTENTIAL ACECs NOT PROPOSED FOR DESIGNATION IN THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE, (BLM)

1. Cedar Mtns. (15,020 acres)

This ACEC area was originally proposed as a WSA by a public coalition group, but not by the BLM; see the Alliance AWR report (Index No. 35) for our full set of comments on this ACEC proposal.

However, it seems appropriate to state here that with the low quality landscape as further

described in Index No. 35 and considering developments within the area, the site does not justify ACEC management any more than it did for wilderness classification. Your lower classification in the RMP/EIS tends to confirm our assessment as given above.

2. Las Uvas Mtns. (11,150 acres)

This is another area that was previously proposed for Wilderness designation by a public coalition, but not supported as such by the BLM; see the Alliance AWR report (Index No. 44) for our full comments as supplemented below.

The BLM documentation (3/83 EIS draft) reported that special features are not significant and a private study documented many man-made appurtenances.

The area was further described as being very dry and barren with generally unspectacular scenery, with monotonous creosote bush vegetation; ie. what is there to manage under ACEC criteria? Your lower classification for the site tends to confirm this assessment.

3. Tres Hermanas (960 acres)

This ACEC proposed site is within an area which has been heavily impacted by mining and other activities, including rockhounding in the recent period. Therefore, it seems inappropriate to consider the area for ACEC management; and you seem to concur in this assessment by the lower rating you have given this proposal in the RMP/EIS listing.

4. Big Hatchet Mtns. (67,960 acres)

This is a duplicate listing of the Big Hatchet Mtns. except that the acreage has been increased in this lower rated ACEC proposal. Therefore, the comments made previously under item No. 6, above, are equally pertinent and they are to apply to here as well; see also the Alliance AWR report (Index No. 34).

19

5. Kilbourne Hole (10,640 acres)

This also is a duplicate listing for Kilbourne Hole (see Item No. 17 above) except in this case the ACEC is about doubled in area size; therefore the comments made in the higher rated proposal above are to be applied to this lower rated ACEC proposal as well. In addition, it should be noted that the area surrounding the depression is totally non-descript with its lack of scenic qualities and the vegetation should be of little concern to anyone. Moreover, the geological values are best appreciated by geologists who have easy access to the area. The general public will have little appreciation for these "values".

In summary, many areas proposed for ACEC management and those for designation in the Wild and Scenic River proposals involve some of the same areas previously designated as Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs)by either the BLM, a public coalition group, or both, for inclusion in a proposed New Mexico Wilderness Bill. These WSAs with Alliance index reference numbers are (33) Alamo Hueco, (34) Big Hatchets, (35) Cedar Mtns.,(36) Cooke's Range, (37) Cowboy Spring, (38) Florida Mtns., (39) Blue Creek, (40) Gila Lower Box, (41) Gila Middle Box, (42) Organ Mtns., (43) Robledo Mtns., (44) Las Uvas Mtns., (45) West Potrillo Mtns., (46) Mt. Riley, (47) Aden Lava Flow, (51) Granite Gap, and (52) Guadalupe Canyon.

Actually, the WSAs with Index No.s 34, 37, 40, 42, 45, 46, and 47 were those that were originally proposed by the BLM, as well as by the public coalition; and it is our position that by proposing ACEC management for these WSAs, the BLM has admitted to the non-conforming nature of these WSAs under wilderness criteria. Additionally, the ACEC management proposals by the BLM for the remaining WSAs, above, recognize that these areas also do not conform to wilderness criteria. 19-11

Moreover, in most instances, areas proposed for these latter ACEC designations far exceed the land area required and that can be managed and controlled for protecting the marginal features that may exist there.

Accordingly, we herewith ask that you review your proposals as outlined in your RMP/EIS draft of August, 1991, in consideration of these Alliance comments and concerns, as expressed in this letter,

19-11 Roadless areas 34 (the Florida Mountains), 37 (the Hachita Valley), 40 (Little Hatchet East), 42 (Cedar Mountains), 45 (Coyote Hills), and 47 (the Tres Hermanas Mountains) were not originally proposed as WSAs by the BLM. Of these areas, only portions of the Florida Mountains and Cedar Mountains were designated as wilderness study areas. Please refer to Comment 19-9 for a discussion of ACEC and wilderness values.

19

BLM,RMP Team Leader.....13 November 6, 1991

and as covered in the New Mexico Land Use Alliance BLM Wilderness Review draft (Feb. 1989; Rev. 7/89), which has been provided as part of these comments to you.

Please keep me informed as to your progress and as to your position as to the Alliance comments and recommendations.

Sincerely,

J. W. Hartshorne, Pres.

JWH:ahh

20

PAGE 1 OF 5

1600 Santa Catalina
Deming, NM 88030

November 12, 1991

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Tim:

I oppose the entire Mimbres Resource Management plan on the basis of the cost of implementing a plan that is not needed here in Luna County.

I also oppose the entire plan because the Bureau has not followed Section 202 of the Federal Land policy and Management Act 1976. 20-1 This section clearly states that you are required to coordinate land use planning activities with other Federal agencies, State and local governments and Indian tribes. I fail to see any evidence of this here in Luna County!

20-2 I oppose the Luna County part of the plan on the basis that it does not adequately address the economic impacts on each of the issues. I again refer you to Section 202 of FLPMA 1976.

20-3 I also oppose the Mimbres RMP since Luna County already has adopted an Interim Land Use Plan that addresses and opposes all four issues identified in your plan.

I specifically oppose the Land Ownership Adjustment issue from a rancher's viewpoint since you indicate there could be a loss of 7,245 animal units (6,808 in Luna and Grant Counties). 20-4 You also fail to specifically identify the lands you have targeted for acquisition and disposal.

The ACEC issue within Luna County has to be opposed by the general public because of its restrictive nature. I question whether the scenic beauty of the Florida Mountains is more important than the economic well being of Luna County!

Enclosed are three petitions which contain 87 names of people who either live or visit Luna County and as you can see oppose any limited use or closing of any roads in Luna County. The announced methods of policing the proposed road closures and designations is still in my opinion an arbitrary tactic.

20-1 At the beginning of the planning process in 1989, BLM met with local, city, and county governments in the planning area (including Luna County) to discuss development of the RMP, major anticipated issues, and any consistency concerns or requirements on the part of these local governments. Since that time, we wrote Luna County on a number of occasions to keep the County informed at every step in the process. BLM officials also attended the Luna County Commission meeting on September 14, 1990, to present an update on the RMP and to seek further input from Luna County. At the request of the Luna County Commission, BLM met again with the Commission on December 17, 1991 to discuss BLM RMP proposals and their consistency with the Luna County Interim Land Use Plan. The consultation and coordination process for the RMP, which includes coordination with the Luna County Commission, is summarized in Chapter 5.

20-2 Social and economic impacts of the Proposed Plan with respect to each issue are addressed in Chapter 4 of the RMP/EIS.

20-3 After reviewing the Luna County Ordinance and Interim Land Use Plan, it appears that BLM is and will remain consistent with the Ordinance and Plan to the extent the County Plan is consistent with the laws governing the administration of public land. A letter dated February 12, 1992, to Mr. Edward B. Kretek, Chairman of the Luna County Board of County Commissioners from Tim Salt, Mimbres Area Manager, addressed the areas of conflict. The areas of conflict regarded designation of ACECs, wilderness, and County concurrence on our land use plan.

Because of the concerns raised by yourselves and others, following the close of the Draft RMP comment period on November 25, 1991, we held nearly 20 additional small group meetings over a 3-month period between January and April 1992 to listen and respond to these concerns. Many of the changes made to the Draft RMP and included in the Proposed Plan are a direct outcome of those meetings. We took forward to working with Luna County and will remain as consistent as possible with the Ordinance and Interim Land Use Plan. Also see response to Comment 20-1.

20-4 Map 2-3 shows disposal areas as identified in the Proposed Plan.

As stated in the Proposed Plan, the State trust and private lands for potential acquisition would be located within the Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) and other special management areas. Maps showing the inholdings within these areas are also located in the RMP/EIS. See Map 2-4 and maps for individual areas in Appendix H.

Larger, more detailed maps are available in the Mimbres Resource Area Office for your review.

20

PAGE 2 of 5

Mr. Tim Salt
Page Two
November 12, 1991

(Having the volunteering public inform on their fellow man).

On the access issue, Alternative A is my preferred alternative.

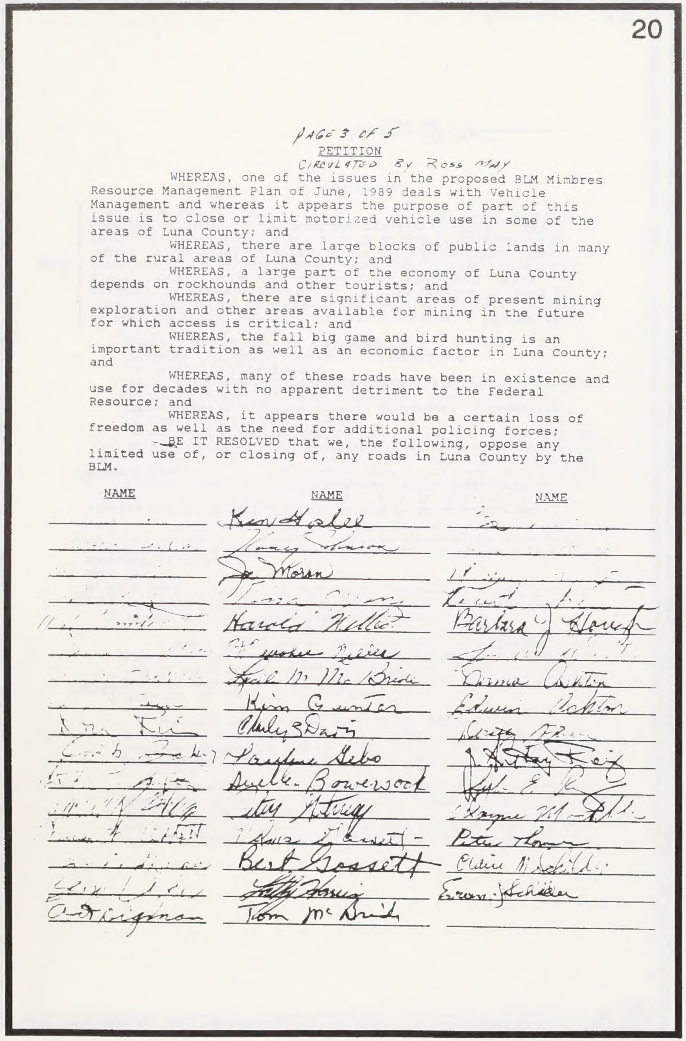
On Right of Ways: Alternative A
On Minerals: Alternative A
On Recreation: Alterative A
On Cultural and Paleontological Resources: Alternative A
On Wildlife Habitat: Alternative A
Soil, Air and Water: Alternative A
Vegetation: Alterative A
Riparian and Arroyo Habitat: Alternative A
Special Status Species: Alternative A

20-5 On the anticipated impact of livestock grazing, a 40% use of Black Gramma is not a realistic year in year out goal. A more realistic goal would be 60% use. On some ranches it would be almost impossible to even achieve a 60% usage goal, while other ranches might reach a 40% usage goal easily. Much would depend on the physical makeup of the different pastures, and many other variables. A 10% loss in animal units would be a economic disaster to the ranching community. (This is the loss projected by your team).

Sincerely,

Ross May
Ross May

20-5 We have revised the sections that singled out black grama in the Draft Plan. The Proposed Plan now includes utilization criteria for all key forage species. These criteria are only intended as a guide for the development of grazing systems. Flexibility in use levels and rest cycles will be available for permittees under an allotment specific management plan which takes into consideration the physiological needs of key forage species as well as other resource needs and uses. For additional information on black grama and other forage species, refer to Appendix C-3, Grazing Management Considerations for the Mimbres Resource Area.



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PAGE 3 OF 5

PETITION

CIRCULATED BY ROSS MAY

WHEREAS, one of the issues in the proposed BLM Mimbres Resource Management Plan of June, 1989 deals with Vehicle Management and whereas it appears the purpose of part of this issue is to close or limit motorized vehicle use in some of the areas of Luna County; and

WHEREAS, there are large blocks of public lands in many of the rural areas of Luna County; and

WHEREAS, a large part of the economy of Luna County depends on rockhounds and other tourists; and

WHEREAS, there are significant areas of present mining exploration and other areas available for mining in the future for which access is critical; and

WHEREAS, the fall big game and bird hunting is an important tradition as well as an economic factor in Luna County; and

WHEREAS, many of these roads have been in existence and use for decades with no apparent detriment to the Federal Resource; and

WHEREAS, it appears there would be a certain loss of freedom as well as the need for additional policing forces;

BE IT RESOLVED that we, the following, oppose any limited use of, or closing of, any roads in Luna County by the BLM.

NAME NAME NAME

Art Brigman

Ken Holze

Joe Moran

Gail M. McBride

Kim Gunter

Charley Davis

Pauline Gebo

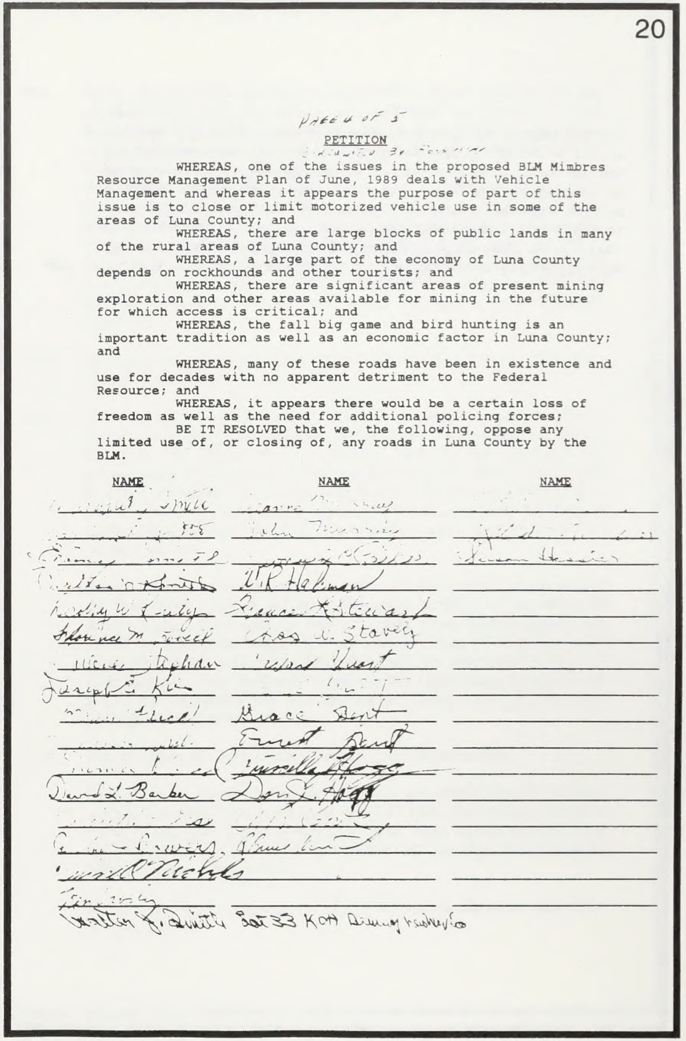
Bert Gossett

Tom McBride

Norma Ashton

Edwin Ashton

Peter Thomas



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PAGE 4 OF 5

PETITION

CIRCULATED BY ROSS MAY

WHEREAS, one of the issues in the proposed BLM Mimbres Resource Management Plan of June, 1989 deals with Vehicle Management and whereas it appears the purpose of part of this issue is to close or limit motorized vehicle use in some of the areas of Luna County; and

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WHEREAS, a large part of the economy of Luna County depends on rockhounds and other tourists; and

WHEREAS, there are significant areas of present mining exploration and other areas available for mining in the future for which access is critical; and

WHEREAS, the fall big game and bird hunting is an important tradition as well as an economic factor in Luna County; and

WHEREAS, many of these roads have been in existence and use for decades with no apparent detriment to the Federal Resource; and

WHEREAS, it appears there would be a certain loss of freedom as well as the need for additional policing forces;

BE IT RESOLVED that we, the following, oppose any limited use of, or closing of, any roads in Luna County by the BLM.

NAME NAME NAME

Florence M. Sweet

Joseph E. Klein

David L. Barber

Merrill Nichols

V.R. Holman

Frances K. Stewart

Chas W. Stavely

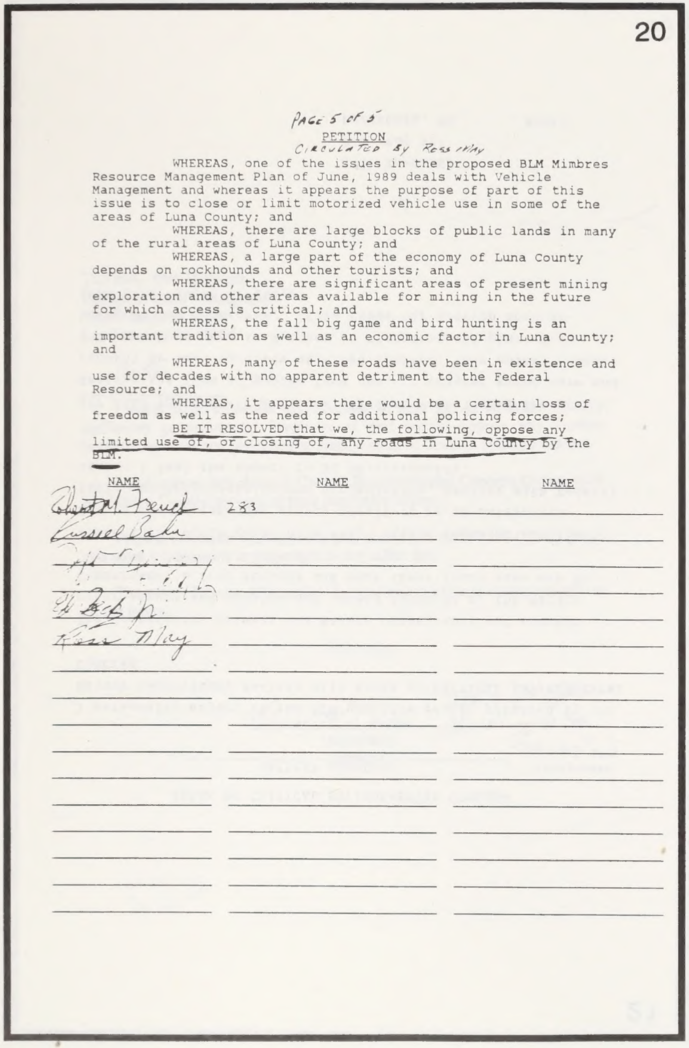
Grace Bent

Ernest Bent

Priscilla Hogg

Don J. Hogg

Walter J. Quintin Box 33 KCH Deming New Mexico



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PAGE 5 OF 5

PETITION

CIRCULATED BY Ross May

WHEREAS, one of the issues in the proposed BLM Mimbres Resource Management Plan of June, 1989 deals with Vehicle Management and whereas it appears the purpose of part of this issue is to close or limit motorized vehicle use in some of the areas of Luna County; and

WHEREAS, there are large blocks of public lands in many of the rural areas of Luna County; and

WHEREAS, a large part of the economy of Luna County depends on rockhounds and other tourists; and

WHEREAS, there are significant areas of present mining exploration and other areas available for mining in the future for which access is critical; and

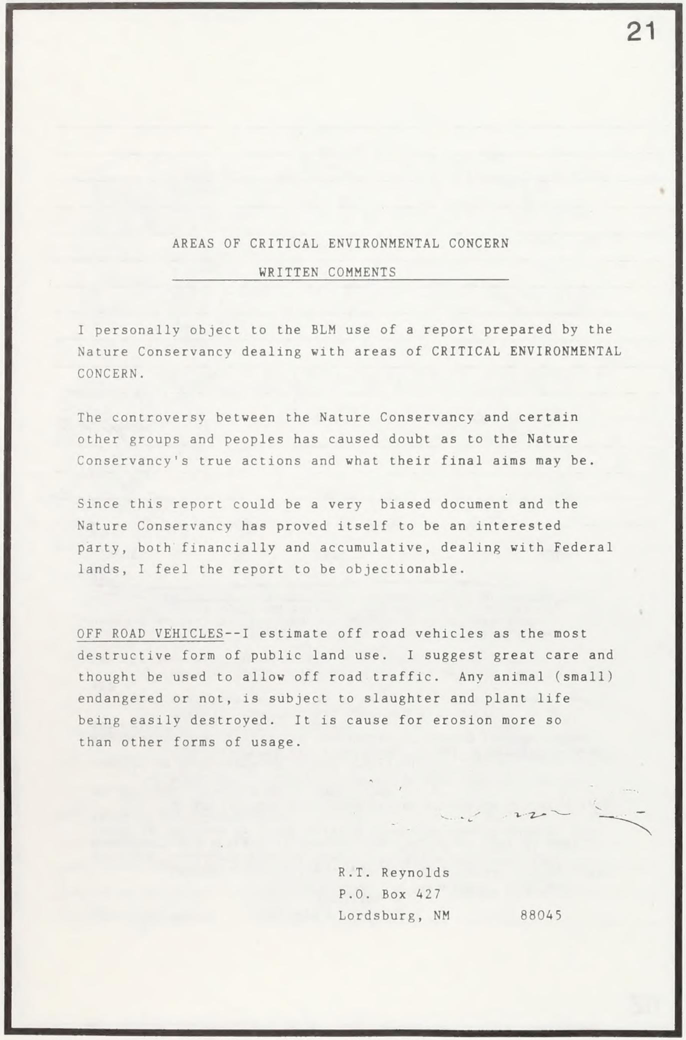
WHEREAS, the fall big game and bird hunting is an important tradition as well as an economic factor in Luna County; and

WHEREAS, many of these roads have been in existence and use for decades with no apparent detriment to the Federal Resource; and

WHEREAS, it appears there would be a certain loss of freedom as well as the need for additional policing forces;

BE IT RESOLVED that we, the following, oppose any limited use of, or closing of, any roads in Luna County by the BLM.

NAME	NAME	NAME
Robert M. French	283	
Russell Baker		
Ross May		



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AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

WRITTEN COMMENTS

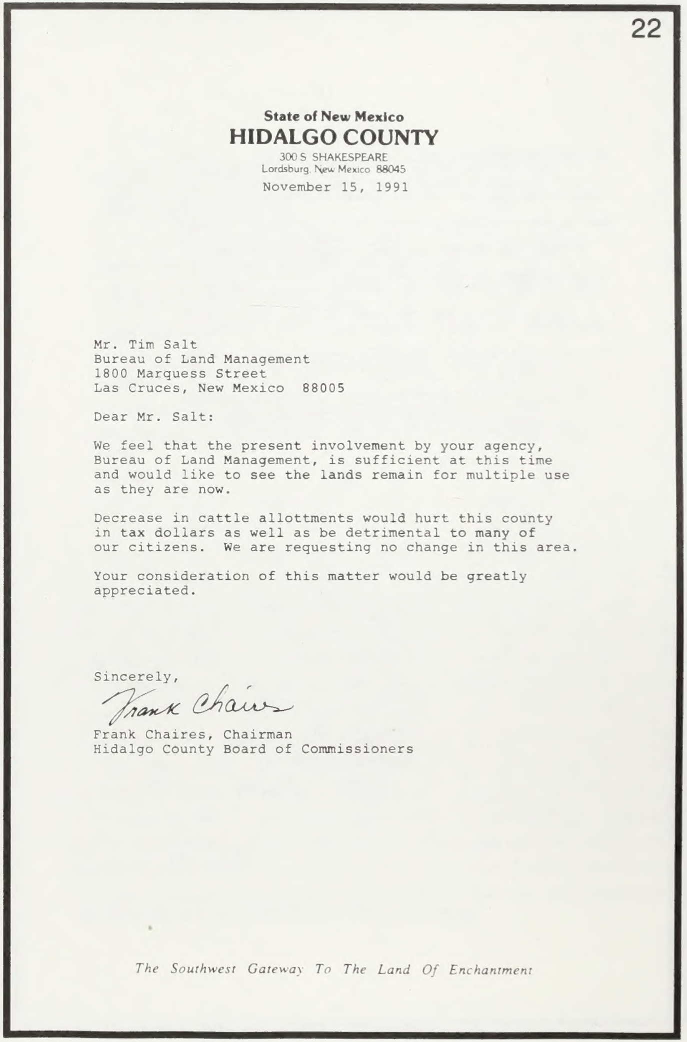
I personally object to the BLM use of a report prepared by the Nature Conservancy dealing with areas of CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN.

The controversy between the Nature Conservancy and certain other groups and peoples has caused doubt as to the Nature Conservancy's true actions and what their final aims may be.

Since this report could be a very biased document and the Nature Conservancy has proved itself to be an interested party, both financially and accumulative, dealing with Federal lands, I feel the report to be objectionable.

OFF ROAD VEHICLES--I estimate off road vehicles as the most destructive form of public land use. I suggest great care and thought be used to allow off road traffic. Any animal (small) endangered or not, is subject to slaughter and plant life being easily destroyed. It is cause for erosion more so than other forms of usage.

R.T. Reynolds
P.O. Box 427
Lordsburg, NM 88045



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State of New Mexico
HIDALGO COUNTY
300 S SHAKESPEARE
Lordsburg, New Mexico 88045

November 15, 1991

Mr. Tim Salt
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

We feel that the present involvement by your agency, Bureau of Land Management, is sufficient at this time and would like to see the lands remain for multiple use as they are now.

Decrease in cattle allotments would hurt this county in tax dollars as well as be detrimental to many of our citizens. We are requesting no change in this area.

Your consideration of this matter would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Frank Chaires

Frank Chaires, Chairman
Hidalgo County Board of Commissioners

The Southwest Gateway To The Land Of Enchantment

23

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dir Sir:

I deem BLM's present involvement in land use in Hidalgo County sufficient governmental involvement and would oppose any further broadening of federal government management of lands in Hidalgo County.

I also oppose any Area of Critical Environmental Concern Designation in Hidalgo County because of their restrictive nature.

Present vehicular management and access has sufficed for many years and more burdensome management is not called for.

Therefore, I favor Alternative A (continuing present management) on all the issues.

Sincerely,

Oma McCants
(signature)
(address)

205 E 3rd St.
Lordsburg, N.M.
88045

Paid Advertisement

Comment 23 represents 86 identical comments. The authors are listed in Table 5-4; they include comment numbers:

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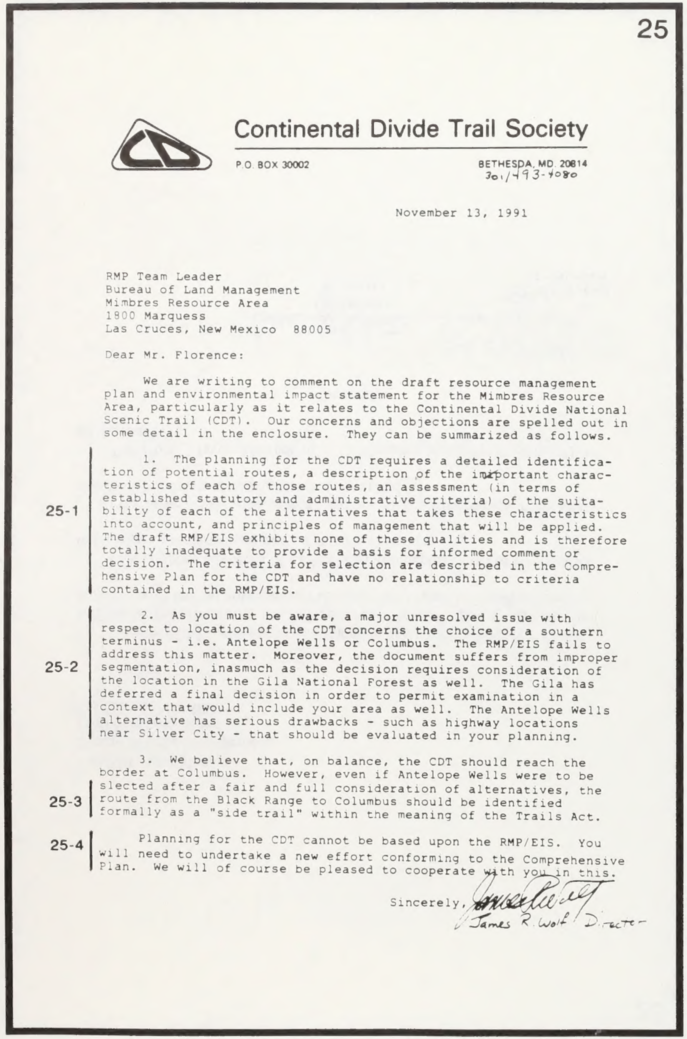

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Continental Divide Trail Society

P.O. BOX 30002
BETHESDA, MD 20814
301/493-4080

November 13, 1991

RMP Team Leader
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Dear Mr. Florence:

We are writing to comment on the draft resource management plan and environmental impact statement for the Mimbres Resource Area, particularly as it relates to the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT). Our concerns and objections are spelled out in some detail in the enclosure. They can be summarized as follows.

25-1 1. The planning for the CDT requires a detailed identification of potential routes, a description of the important characteristics of each of those routes, an assessment (in terms of established statutory and administrative criteria) of the suitability of each of the alternatives that takes these characteristics into account, and principles of management that will be applied. The draft RMP/EIS exhibits none of these qualities and is therefore totally inadequate to provide a basis for informed comment or decision. The criteria for selection are described in the Comprehensive Plan for the CDT and have no relationship to criteria contained in the RMP/EIS.

25-2 2. As you must be aware, a major unresolved issue with respect to location of the CDT concerns the choice of a southern terminus - i.e. Antelope Wells or Columbus. The RMP/EIS fails to address this matter. Moreover, the document suffers from improper segmentation, inasmuch as the decision requires consideration of the location in the Gila National Forest as well. The Gila has deferred a final decision in order to permit examination in a context that would include your area as well. The Antelope Wells alternative has serious drawbacks - such as highway locations near Silver City - that should be evaluated in your planning.

3. We believe that, on balance, the CDT should reach the border at Columbus. However, even if Antelope Wells were to be 25-3 slected after a fair and full consideration of alternatives, the route from the Black Range to Columbus should be identified formally as a "side trail" within the meaning of the Trails Act.

25-4 Planning for the CDT cannot be based upon the RMP/EIS. You will need to undertake a new effort conforming to the Comprehensive Plan. We will of course be pleased to cooperate with you in this.

Sincerely,

James R. Wolf Director

25-1 Please refer to response 13-1 and Appendix H-2. The Draft RMP did not contain a detailed route comparison. The criteria for route selection detailed in the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail Comprehensive Plan are very general, and were applied to the alternative routes in the selection of the preferred alternative. More specific criteria for selection of an exact trail route such as miles of road, access, costs, signing, water availability, and supply points will be more fully analyzed in an Environmental Assessment/Location Report following completion of the RMP.

25-2 The southern terminus of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail in the United States must be at an International Port of Entry. Antelope Wells and Columbus, New Mexico, and Douglas, Arizona are the alternative ports to consider. The alternative routes shown in the Draft RMP/EIS end at either Antelope Wells or Columbus except for the Peloncillo Mountains route detailed in Alternative C. That route would require additional planning in Arizona, outside the scope of the Mimbres RMP, to tie the trail into Douglas. The routes in Alternatives B and D, plus the Florida Mountains side trail all connect to either Antelope Wells or Columbus. The Gila National Forest has selected a route that brings the trail to the southern end of the Burro Mountains on the actual Continental Divide. The Forest Service decision is not to defer a selection of a specific route pending completion of the Mimbres RMP, but to designate a connecting trail through the Mimbres Mountains that could potentially be linked to the proposed Florida Mountain side trail that is carried forward under all alternatives in the Draft RMP. This side trail is a considerable distance off the actual Divide and does not provide the same level of scenic quality that the other proposed routes do. This route is also not used by the majority of present-day hikers. The Antelope Wells Route and Big Hatchet Mountains are the dominant routes chosen by Continental Divide National Scenic Trail users.

25-3 Please refer to Appendix H-1 for a comparison of the routes and associated values. The preferred route was selected based on consideration of the alternatives. The Florida Mountain side trail has been proposed in all alternatives because of its potential as a side trail within the meaning of the Trails Act.

25-4 Planning for the Continental Divide Trail is based on the RMP/EIS, which in fact is the proper vehicle for analyzing alternative routes within the BLM planning process. The Comprehensive Plan guidelines are very general, but the Mimbres RMP/EIS conforms to the intent of the Comprehensive Plan. Further refinement of the route will occur in an Environmental Assessment/Location Report following completion of the RMP.

25

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL SOCIETY

Supplemental Comments on August 1991 Draft
RMP/EIS for the Mimbres Resource Area

References are to the Comprehensive Plan for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (1985), which establishes policies to guide the Bureau of Land Management and other agencies in the location and management of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail.

25-5 The location of the trail is not defined in sufficient detail to permit analysis and comment.

We are unable to identify the location of the trail, under any of the alternatives, in sufficient detail to permit analysis and comment. This is contrary to page 39-40 of the Comprehensive Plan, which provides for a Location Report which will enable the advice and assistance of interested parties to be made part of the planning process. The Location Report is to include descriptions, including maps. As shown in the Comprehensive Plan, maps at a scale of approximately 1/2" to the mile are needed in order to provide an adequate basis for comment and planning.

25-6 The characteristics of the routes being considered are not defined.

Contrary to pages 39-40 of the Comprehensive Plan, the draft RMP/EIS fails to include a general description of the trail segment (on any alternative) -- including types of management areas, private lands, physical environment, unique features, recreational opportunity spectrum classes, associated cultural or historic features, and current types and kinds of use. This information is needed in order for readers to understand BLM's assessment of different routes and in order to be able to comment upon the routes in a reasoned and meaningful way. (Water availability, public access, visual quality, and avoidance of paved or other high-standard roads are likely to be especially critical.)

25-7 Principles of management direction are not adequately defined.

Contrary to pages 39-40 of the Comprehensive Plan, the draft RMP/EIS fails to set out specific management direction that will apply to the CDNST -- such items as protection, safety, maintenance, rules and regulations needed, signing, associated recreation facilities, and planned carrying capacity.

25-8 The impact that route designation will have upon associated lands and resources is not adequately defined.

Contrary to pages 39-40 of the Comprehensive Plan and Figure 5A thereof, the environmental analysis fails to include -- either for any particular alternative or comparatively for different alternatives -- effects on the physical and biological setting, effects on the general socio-economic setting, etc.

25-5 Please refer to Appendix H-2 in the Final RMP. The purpose of this document is to analyze alternative trail corridors. The actual trail may be located anywhere within the designated corridor, so the final location within the corridor to be selected may vary within that corridor. In the Mimbres RMP, alternative routes were plotted on 1:100,000 scale maps which are adequate considering the open nature of the terrain and low vegetation in the Mimbres Resource Area.

25-6 Please refer to Appendix H-2. None of the routes completely avoid high-standard roads, which is impossible because of the size and transportation network in the Mimbres Resource Area. All proposed routes were selected to avoid roads as much as possible while providing challenging hiking opportunities and spectacular scenery. Water is not available over most of the Resource Area because of the generally dry nature of the Chihuahuan Desert. In desert regions, it is usually necessary to carry sufficient water between sources. Water availability will be more fully analyzed in the Environmental Assessment/Location Report.

25-7 The RMP/EIS details management of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail Corridor in Appendix H-2.

25-8 Effects of designation of the Alternative routes are analyzed in Chapter 4.

25

25-9 The draft RMP/EIS employs improper criteria for selection of a route for the CDNST.

There is no necessary connection between the selection of one of the overall management alternatives set out in the draft RMP/EIS and the location criteria that are required, under the Comprehensive Plan (pp. 31ff), for the CDNST. The location criteria that must be applied include consideration of opportunities for access to significant cultural, historical, recreational, or scenic opportunities; use of public right-of-way; reasonable efforts to avoid motorized travelways; protection of critical biophysical environment; safety (including water availability); and costs. The draft RMP/EIS makes no effort to evaluate, in light of the criteria in the Comprehensive Plan, the pros and cons of the alternatives that it identifies.

25-10 The process by which the identified alternatives was selected is not adequately explained.

There is an inadequate basis for limiting the alternatives to those identified in the draft RMP/EIS. Why, for example, is there no consideration of an alternative that would pass through Lordsburg and then continue south to the Animas Mountains? What efforts have been made to determine whether, and under what conditions, the Nature Conservancy would permit trail users to pass through the Gray Ranch?

25-11 The document fails to consider reasonable alternatives.

The fundamental issue that should be addressed is whether the CDT should terminate at Antelope Wells or at Columbus. The document merely assumes that it should terminate at Antelope Wells, without any reasoned explanation or support. On the contrary, there are many reasons to favor Columbus -- less highway walking, easier access, scenic, historic, and wildlife interest -- and these need to be evaluated carefully. The designation of a "spur trail" to Columbus is an inadequate substitute for the consideration of alternatives dictated by NEPA. The deficiency is compounded by the failure to indicate what management policies and principles would be used to ensure that travel on the "spur trail" would satisfy the outdoor recreation objectives of the National Trails System Act.

25-12 Limiting the scope of the RMP/EIS to the Mimbres Resource Area constitutes improper segmentation.

Not only does the document fail to consider the real alternatives described above, but the scope (the Mimbres Resource Area) is too narrow to provide an adequate basis for decision. It is impossible to evaluate the Antelope Wells and Columbus alternatives by looking at the Mimbres Resource Area alone. It is essential to take into account the portion of the Gila National Forest from the Black Range south. The Gila's planning documents would accommodate either a Silver City-Antelope Wells route or a Deming-Columbus route. The choice should be made by evaluating both the Forest Service and BLM lands and not just the Mimbres Resource Area alone.

25-9 Please refer to Appendix H-2.

25-10 The final decision can include any of the proposed alternatives or any combination of them. It is possible that a route could be selected from the Burro Mountains to Lordsburg and then south through the Pyramid and Animas Mountains. Such a route would necessarily traverse long distances of roadway or require considerably greater easement acquisition across State trust and private lands. Discussions with The Nature Conservancy have taken place, but the BLM has not received a definite answer on the potential use of the Gray Ranch for the Continental Divide Trail. The route proposed in Alternative B crosses a portion of the Gray Ranch that was carefully planned to provide spectacular scenery including the Cowboy Spring Wilderness Study Area while avoiding the extremely sensitive areas such as endangered species habitats.

25-11 The RMP addresses alternate ports of entry for the trail. The proposed routes to Antelope Wells have better wildlife viewing opportunities and fewer highway intersections than the proposed Florida side trail. The routes to Antelope Wells do not follow major highways, as the Florida Mountains route must to cross Interstate 10. The proposed route has been selected after consideration of these factors as recommended in the Comprehensive Plan. Columbus is 75 miles away from the actual intersection of the Continental Divide with the International Boundary. This distance is greater than the planning criteria the Trails Act provides for. Columbus is within 50 miles of some portions of the Divide. However, a large portion of the southern end of the Divide (over 70 miles) is over 50 miles from Columbus, including the most scenic, biologically diverse, and secluded portion of the Divide in southern New Mexico.

25-12 The BLM does not have the authority to plan for non-public lands including National Forest land. It is outside the legal authority of FLPMA and beyond the scope of this RMP to do so. The Gila National Forest has completed it's route selection and Environmental Assessment.

25

25-13 Description of a route to Columbus as a "spur trail" is ambiguous.

Map 2-11 identifies the general location of a "Florida Mountains Spur," but there appears to be no further description of the management practices that would be instituted with respect to that location. If the intention is to designate a side trail under Section 6 of the National Trails System Act, the RMP/EIS should so state explicitly. There should also be a description of how this side trail would be managed. While we now believe that the Florida Mountains should be adopted as the primary route, we would not object to its being considered as a "side trail" as part of one alternative that might be considered in a proper planning effort.

25-14 Location of the "Florida Mountains Spur" should be refined.

Before you proceed further, you need to examine more carefully, and explain, options for locating a route to the Columbus area. The objective should be to include Fort Cummings, Cookes Spring, the crest of the Florida Mountains, the Tres Hermanas, and Columbus itself. It would be helpful if you would consult with other knowledgeable and interested parties as you develop alternatives, instead of limiting comment to possibly less-than-optimal locations that you have prepared in-house.

25-15 Visual resource management policies need to be explained.

The Comprehensive Plan (p. 49) calls for rating the CDT as a "high sensitivity level" travel route. The selection of VRM Class II needs to be related to this policy statement. Moreover, pending selection of a route for designation, each of the alternatives should be managed in a way that will maintain visual quality as well as other attributes (Comprehensive Plan, p. 26).

25-16 An inaccuracy in the RMP/EIS should be corrected.

Contrary to the information at page H-56, less than half of the trail route has yet been designated.

25-17 Plans for acquisition of "all State trust and private lands" need to be articulated.

While this is a worthy goal, it is not clear that BLM has the lawful authority to implement it. And, for this very reason, it is essential that any consideration of alternatives should set out in detail the land tenure situation, the feasibility of establishing a desirable continuous right-of-way, prospects for securing the permission of private landowners to cross their property, etc. If the policy is to "acquire all State trust and private lands," the legal basis for executing this policy should be articulated.

25-13 There is a possibility that the Florida Mountain side trail could someday be designated, which is within the scope of the existing analysis and in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan, although the plan does not give specific direction to criteria for selection of or management direction for alternatives as a connecting trail or side trail. The Florida Mountains route would require more easement acquisition for fewer trail miles than alternative routes that are closer to the Continental Divide, which according to the Comprehensive Plan may be an unacceptable reason for relocating the trail further from the Divide.

25-14 Please refer to response 25-13. While we understand the position supporting the Florida Mountains route, that route would not connect with the designated Continental Divide National Scenic Trail on the Gila National Forest, would exclude half the Divide (70 miles) within the Mimbres Resource Area from consideration, and would necessitate more easement acquisition for fewer trail miles than other alternatives closer to the Divide. Significant scenic quality and wildlife viewing opportunities would be lost.

25-15 It is anticipated that designation of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail through the Mimbres Resource Area will take a considerable amount of time. Protection of the scenic quality of the potential trail routes will be provided through the right-of-way avoidance zones, and through VRM Class II management of most of the proposed routes within hilly or mountainous terrain. Because of the complexities created by the fractured land status throughout the area, acquisition of easements will probably be a drawn out effort and uses may occur on the non-Federal lands that could detract from the scenic quality of the trail in certain areas. Refer to Appendix G for descriptions of VRM objectives.

25-16 Thank you for pointing out this misstatement. The trail or portions of it have been designated in Idaho and Montana through which the Continental Divide passes. New Mexico is one of the last states to work on route selection for designation, along with Colorado and Wyoming.

25-17 Acquisition of State trust and private lands would be accomplished through the exchange program or direct purchase. On page 2-11 of the RMP/EIS under "Public Land Exchanges," it states that FLPMA (The Federal Land Policy and Management Act) and FLFEA (Federal Land Facilitation Exchange Act) provide specific authority for land exchanges. FLPMA Section 205 provides specific authority for direct purchase. The BLM will need to acquire access for completion of this portion of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. This acquisition could be through purchase of easements or through exchange with willing landowners. It is not necessary to actually acquire the land, but that avenue will be pursued through exchanges whenever the opportunity arises. There will be opportunities for user groups to work with landowners on developing agreements for access or acquiring easements. In the meantime, users will need to use rights-of-way to avoid trespassing on non-Federal lands.

28

D U Y RANCH
POST OFFICE BOX 63
HACHITA, NEW MEXICO 88040-0063
NOVEMBER 18, 1991

TIM SALT, AREA MANAGER
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Dear Sir:

I feel that BLM's present involvement in land use in Hidalgo, Luna. Dona Ana and parts of Grant counties is sufficient and would oppose any further broadening of federal government management of these lands.

I also oppose any Area of Critical Environmental Conern Designation in these counties because of their restrictive nature.

Present vehicular management and access has sufficed for many years and more burdensome management is not called for.

Therefore, I favor Alternative A (continuing present management) on all issues.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Faulkner

Richard Faulkner

29

THE
NATURE
CONSERVANCY

New Mexico Field Office 107 Cienega Street • Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501 • (505) 988-3867

November 18, 1991

Mr. Scott Florence, RMP Team Leader
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Mr. Florence:

Thank you for providing us with a copy of the Draft RMP/EIS for the Mimbres Resource area. We are pleased to have this opportunity to comment.

The draft reflects an enormous effort on the part of your staff, and we believe that you have taken the right direction on most issues in your preferred alternative. We offer both some general comments and comments specific to proposed ACEC's that have biological importance. Comments are keyed to pages in the draft.

P. 2-64 Vehicle Management. Because of the fragility of environments throughout the MRA, we recommend that all ORV use be restricted to designated roads and trails except for limited areas that may be set aside principally for this recreation use.

P. 2-70 Vegetation. We agree with the intent in alternative D to manage utilization of black grama not to exceed an average of 40 percent. For land treatments we recommend that alternative B be adopted, namely that management be limited to prescribed grazing, prescribed burning and prescribed natural fires.

P. 2-72 Riparian and Arroyo Habitat. The Preferred Alternative apparently focuses on riparian habitat management within proposed ACEC's and SMA's. Riparian habitat management is currently and properly a national priority for BLM because of the severe degradation of these habitats on public lands in the West. We urge you to include an objective to the effect that all riparian habitats in the MRA will be maintained or improved through the use of grazing prescriptions on each allotment and by limiting ORV use to designated existing roads and trails. 29-1

29-2 The following comments apply to appendix H, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. In the final RMP we suggest that

29-1 As stated in the Continuing Management Guidance section of the RMP/EIS (page 2-34), the BLM will manage to achieve healthy and productive ecological conditions for public land riparian areas. This section is common to all alternatives and addresses all riparian areas that may not be included in an ACEC or SMA.

29-2 Individual maps have been included for most ACECs in Appendix H. Maps have not been included for some areas because of the need to protect sensitive cultural or biological resources.

29-2 (Con't) individual maps be provided for each ACEC, since the scale of the general maps (Map 2-10,etc.) is much too small to depict accurate boundaries.

29-3 In general, we strongly disagree with terminating an ACEC designation if an area becomes designated wilderness as recommended in alternative D for Alamo Hueco Mountains, Big Hatchet Mountains, Cooke's Range, Cowboy Spring, Florida Mountains, Gila Lower Box, Organ/Franklin Mountains and Robledo Mountains. Wilderness designation addresses human uses and human impacts on the land whereas ACEC designation highlights areas where special management attention is needed to protect or preserve specific values or resources. These are entirely separate issues and should not be mixed. Each designation should stand on its own.

The following changes are recommended for the planned actions in the preferred alternative for the several proposed biological ACEC's.

29-4 Alamo Hueco Mountains ACEC. We agree with the Alternate D proposed actions except for the proposal to consider chemical brush control. The use of herbicides for vegetation management is inappropriate in an ACEC whose goals include protection of rare plant and animal species. In addition we recommend that grazing be excluded from riparian zones and that the area be withdrawn from locatable mineral entry.

29-5 Antelope Pass ACEC. The preferred alternative is appropriate with the exception of chemical brush control which conflicts with stated management goals. This area should be withdrawn from locatable mineral entry.

29-6 Apache Box ACEC. The stated management goal should be to protect biological and geological values. In addition to the preferred alternative actions, the area should be withdrawn from non-energy leasable minerals.

29-7 Bear Creek ACEC. Please add withdrawal from locatable mineral entry to the preferred alternative.

29-8 Big Hatchet Mountains ACEC. We agree with Alternative D prescriptions except for chemical brush control. An original recommendation was for a smaller ACEC. At the very least, a 4,160-acre core area as originally proposed should be free of herbicide use.

Bishop's Cap ACEC. See our comments under Organ/Franklin Mountains.

Central Peloncillo Mountains ACEC. We support all actions proposed in the preferred alternative.

29-3 We have reconsidered and decided to drop this requirement from the Proposed Plan. ACEC/RNA designations would be retained within designated Wilderness or National Conservation Areas (NCAs).

29-4 There are areas within the Alamo Hueco Mountain which are mixed desert shrub and creosotebush dominated. These areas, on suitable range sites and less than 10 percent slope, could be treated with little or no effect on the adjoining areas. Where rare plants and animals are present, treatment would not be done if it impacted the identified species. At the present time, most of the riparian areas are located on private land. Riparian areas would be managed in accordance with the management prescriptions.

Withdrawal from locatable mineral entry was considered where mineral potential is high and the potential for resource conflict highest. In this case, locatable mineral potential is low. Under the Proposed Plan, the ACEC designation for this area would require a Plan of Operation (POO) for any locatable mineral exploration or development activity. We feel that adequate environmental protection will be provided through the process of developing and approving the POO.

29-5 The use of chemical brush control would only be considered if it was consistent with the management goals of the RNA or ACEC. Chemical brush control would only be used in creosotebush or mesquite dominated areas on slopes of 0-10 percent, so mountainous terrain would be excluded. In any case, the decision to use chemical brush control in any RNA or ACEC would be made with careful consideration of the resource values and management goals for each area. Such use would be considered in site-specific Environmental Assessments.

Withdrawal from locatable mineral entry was considered where mineral potential is high and the potential for resource conflict highest. In this case, locatable mineral potential is low to moderate. Under the Proposed Plan, the Antelope Pass RNA would be closed to vehicle use which requires a plan of operation (POO) for any locatable mineral exploration or development activity. We feel that adequate environmental protection will be provided through the process of developing and approving the POO.

29-6 The management goals for the Apache Box ACEC were inadvertently omitted from the draft plan but have been included in the final. Closure of the area to non-energy mineral leasing has also been added to the final.

29-7 See responses to Comments 29-4 and 29.5.

29-8 See responses to Comments 29-4 and 29-5.

29

Cooke's Range ACEC. Withdrawal from locatable mineral entry should be added. Prohibition of fuelwood collection should be a specific prescription here even though it is understood to be a general rule for the entire Resource Area. 29-9

Cowboy Spring ACEC. We suggest adding an action to "develop a livestock grazing plan that will protect and enhance riparian values." Current grazing practices are having adverse impact on these values. 29-10

Dona Ana Mountains ACEC. Alternative D is appropriate with the addition of withdrawal from locatable mineral entry. 29-11

Fillmore Canyon ACEC. See comments under Organ/Franklin Mountains.

Florida Mountains ACEC. Protection of biological values should be added to your management goals, and chemical brush control should be eliminated. 29-12

Franklin Mountains ACEC. See comments under Organ/Franklin Mountains.

Gila Lower Box/Gila Middle Box ACEC's. We agree with your preferred alternative actions.

Granite Gap ACEC. In addition to actions proposed in the preferred alternative we recommend withdrawal from locatable mineral entry and closure to plant collection except by permit for scientific purposes. 29-13

Guadalupe Canyon ACEC. A statement is needed to the effect that the Mimbres Resource Area part of the ACEC will be managed in coordination with the established Guadalupe Canyon ONA/ACEC in the Safford Resource Area of Arizona. Management actions should include prohibiting wood cutting and gathering for home use, as with the Safford Plan. 29-14

Ice Canyon ACEC. See comments under Organ/Franklin Mountains.

Lordsburg Playa ACEC. The proposed boundaries and total acreage are unclear, as Map 2-26 seems to show the 5,120 acres originally recommended for the ACEC. 29-15 In addition to the actions proposed in Alternative D, we recommended that grazing be monitored for overall ecological conditions (rather than merely for impacts on Atriplex griffithsii and that the area be withdrawn both from locatable mineral entry and from non-energy leasable minerals. 29-16

Organ Mountains ACEC. See comments below.

3

29-9 Closure of the area to fuelwood sale or collection has been added to the final. Also see responses to Comments 29-4 and 29-5.

29-10 We have added a statement pertaining to riparian management objectives. Also see response to Comment 18-4.

29-11 See responses to Comments 29-4 and 29-5.

29-12 We have added protection of biological values to the final. Also see responses to Comments 29-4 and 29-5.

29-13 Plant collecting is illegal anywhere without a permit, with the exception of small quantities for recreational use in accordance with 43 CFR 8365.1-5. Specifically prohibited is digging, removing, or destroying of plants. Even plants in the plant sale areas and in the Adopt-a-Plant Program require a permit before they are removed.

29-14 Statements pertaining to coordination of management with the Guadalupe Canyon ACEC in the Safford District, and closure to fuelwood sale or collection have been added to the final.

29-15 The acreage discrepancy is probably due to the GIS-based acreage calculations used in the RMP.

29-16 Statements have been added to the final pertaining to monitoring and closure to non-energy minerals. We would appreciate any specific criteria to be included in a monitoring scheme, in addition to the *Atriplex*. The Box M Allotment No. 01034 which contains part of the Lordsburg Playa ACEC is managed under a Holistic Resource Management system. These systems are intensively monitored through our rangeland monitoring program. This includes monitoring for ecological condition and trend. The W. A. Walter Allotment No. 01068 is in a C category and is not being monitored intensively. Use supervision inspections will be done annually on this allotment.

29

Robledo Mountains ACEC. 'The proposed actions in the preferred alternative are appropriate.

29-17 Uvas Valley ACEC. We agree with planned actions under alternative D except for chemical brush control. This grassland was nominated for ACEC designation because current and past grazing management have allowed the perpetuation of late seral or even climax grassland conditions. There is every evidence that these conditions can be maintained through continued short duration moderate grazing along with prescribed burning, if necessary. Use of herbicides here would largely negate the value of this site as an exemplar of natural ecological conditions.

29-18 Organ/Franklin Mountains ACEC. While we agree that most of the 56,480 acres proposed for an ACEC in the preferred alternative meet the agency criteria, we urge that additional management actions be implemented for several biologically critical sites within this area. We do not agree that ACEC designations should be terminated if the NCA should become a reality. In fact, were that to occur, it would be all the more important to have designated the following ACEC's in the final RMP in order to focus management attention on these exemplary biological sites.

29-19 Achenbach Canyon ACEC. In addition to the planned action under the Organ/Franklin Mountains Alternative D, we recommend that the primitive road from Soledad to Pena Blanca be closed within the proposed 728-acre Achenbach Canyon ACEC in order to reduce indiscriminate ORV use.

29-20 Bishop's Cap ACEC. A 1920-acre ACEC is recommended that would include both the general preferred alternative actions along with the addition of closure to public vehicle use, closure to grazing and closure to all plant collection except by permit for scientific purposes.

29-21 Filmore Canyon ACEC. This area should be closed to vehicle use and to grazing.

29-22 Franklin Mountain ACEC. A 4,020-acre ACEC, as previously proposed, should be closed to plant collection except by permit for scientific purposes, in addition to the general PA actions.

29-23 Ice Canyon ACEC. Originally The Nature Conservancy nominated an ACEC of 400 acres here. Because of recent discoveries of another T & E plant, the state sensitive smooth bur-cucumber (*Sicyos glaber*), along the west escarpment, we now recommend a 480-acre ACEC. This ACEC would consist of T23S, R3E, Sec. 12, NE 1/4 and N 1/2 of SE 1/4; and T23S, R4E, Sec. 7, NW 1/4, SW 1/4 and SE 1/4 of NW 1/4; NW 1/4 NE 1/4 and SW 1/4 of SW 1/4. Recommended management prescriptions include closure to public vehicle use, elimination of grazing and closure to plant collection except by permit for scientific purposes.

29-17 See responses to Comments 29-4 and 29-5. Available literature generally recommends that black grama not be burned as it is easily damaged by fire.

29-18 See response to Comment 29-3. Although the Proposed Plan would designate the entire Organ/Franklin Mountains as one large ACEC, we have added mention of these biologically significant areas to the general description of the ACEC, as well as specific management prescriptions that place greater emphasis on monitoring and visitor use supervision in specific areas.

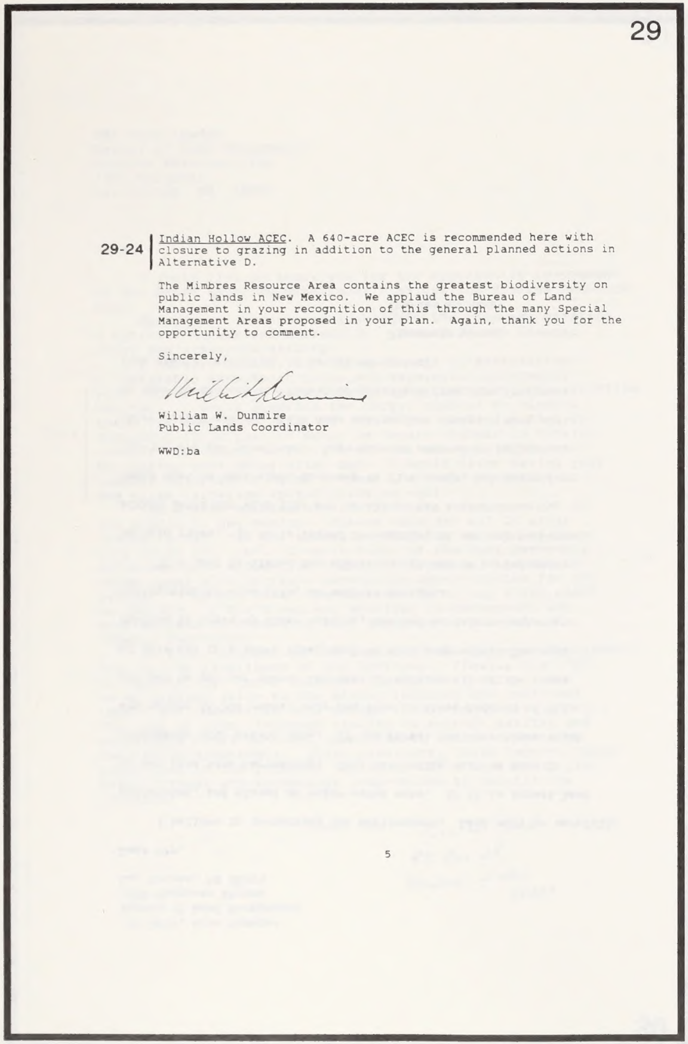
29-19 The subject road is not within the proposed ACEC.

29-20 The Continuing Management Guidance section (which applies to all alternatives) states on page 2-23 that plant collecting is illegal anywhere without a permit. Closure to vehicle use would not be practical or enforceable, nor do we feel it is needed. Limiting vehicles to designated trails allows problem roads or trails to be closed as necessary. The area will remain open to grazing. Grazing will only be excluded from high use recreational areas or significant riparian areas such as Ice Canyon.

29-21 Grazing would be managed in accordance with the Coordinated Resource Management Plan which is incorporated by reference. A portion of Fillmore Canyon has been excluded from grazing by the recently constructed fence around the A. B. Cox Visitor Center and surrounding area. Other portions of the riparian zone in Fillmore Canyon will be at least seasonally deferred from grazing as the Coordinated Resource Management Plan is further implemented. Roads and trails in the area have already been closed to vehicle use.

29-22 See response to Comment 29-20.

29-23 All roads and trails in this area have already been closed to vehicle use (except for administrative purposes). Grazing has been excluded with the construction of the previously-mentioned fence (see response to Comment 29-21). Also see response to Comment 29-20.



29

29-24 Indian Hollow ACEC. A 640-acre ACEC is recommended here with closure to grazing in addition to the general planned actions in Alternative D.

The Mimbres Resource Area contains the greatest biodiversity on public lands in New Mexico. We applaud the Bureau of Land Management in your recognition of this through the many Special Management Areas proposed in your plan. Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

William W. Dunmire
Public Lands Coordinator

WWD:ba

5

29-24 A drift fence is being planned to provide for seasonal deferment of grazing in Indian Hollow.

30

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Sir,

I believe in protecting the environment. Land must be carefully designated, and placed on color coded maps. If it is forest land it may have some harvesting. This harvesting must be done in accordance with growth rate. If the forest contains trees which are mature in 300 years, only one tree in three hundred of this age may be cut per year. The idea of cutting all of the trees of this age in a short time, must be done away with. The past cutting of trees by clear cutting, has led to deforestation and destruction of wild life, as well as erosion.

If a land is listed for wild-life, it may be hunted under certain rules. If it is listed for cattle, it can not be hunted. mixing lands for wild life and cattle is not a good idea. Roads must be controled, they may be fire roads, but roads for logging are not permitted. Logs must be removed by balloon or other lifting device, which does not require roads. Work must be done to protect the forest or grassland from fire, before a fire starts, not after it is out of control.

Sincerely yours,
Charles K. Maxey

31

RMP Team Leader
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Sirs:

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Resource Management Plan for the Mimbres Resource Dist.

My primary concerns in looking at the plan are wildlife & habitat, access and recreation. Secondary are mineral entry and livestock grazing.

31-1 I believe habitat is addressed well in Alternative D. Watershed management plans and vegetation treatments will result in large areas remaining or becoming prime wildlife habitat. I would question the target numbers on bighorn sheep vs. deer under plan D. The Dept. of Game & Fish is expending large sums of money on desert bighorn in Hidalgo County. The sheep have not done well and you (BLM) would be pouring good money after bad. I would favor seeing your numbers adjusted in favor of deer. I would also like to see plans targeting upland birds as well.

The access portion of Alt. "D" is a welcome sight to the public in New Mexico. Please consider all 24 areas listed in Alt. "C" for access development as opposed to only 19 in Alt. "D". I am in favor of the Land Ownership Adjustments to accomplish these developments. Access in these areas will increase recreation opportunities for the public. I do not favor the acquisition of any state parks by the BLM. I don't see any benefits in management and only minimal increases in PILT payments as a result of federal ownership.

My final concern is the impact of the Resource Management Plan on the livelihood of New Mexicans. Viewing Plan "D", it appears that lands excluded from mineral entry would be of minimal value to the mining industry and would not impact the industries well being, (which is my livelihood.) The loss of some livestock grazing to protect habitat and watersheds could be short term effects and be offset by vegetation treatments. These treatments could improve range conditions to the point of increased AUM's in a short time frame. These are acceptable compromises to benefit the resource.

Thank You, Tim W. Hood
P.O. Box 28
Playas, N. Mex.
88009

31-1 The population goals for desert bighorn sheep were set by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) when the Habitat Management Plans (HMPs) were developed in the late 70's and early 80's. These population goals were carried forward in the RMP/EIS and will remain at those numbers until they are determined by the BLM and NMDGF to be invalid or unattainable. The existing HMPs are due to be evaluated, and this issue will be addressed. The numbers given for deer do not totally reflect our commitment to increasing deer numbers in the Resource Area. The numbers in Table 2-17 are minimum population goals. We are required by BLM's Supplemental Program Guidance for RMPs to address population figures, and these numbers were based on the best information available. In addition to the evaluation of the existing HMPs, an additional six HMPs are proposed. These would be developed with the goal of improving deer and pronghorn antelope herds as well as all wildlife. While the BLM has invested much time and funds for bighorn sheep, many of these projects have benefitted all wildlife, including deer. Many projects are in locations which contain habitat for deer as well as bighorn sheep.

32

Jim Winder
Star Route 2, Box 38
Deming, New Mexico 88030

Mr. Tim Salt
Mimbres Resource Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Las Cruces District Office
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

November 19, 1991

Mr. Salt:

I would like submit to you this copy of my written comments concerning the proposed Resource Management Plan for the Mimbres Area. I will address my comments most specifically to Alternative D, however, these comments will also be relevant to the other alternatives. The theme underlying these remarks is the need to protect the basic resource of the area, the soil. When the soil is healthy and protected all other resources, be they wildlife, vegetation or water, are benefited. When soil health deteriorates all other resources, including human, decline.

The soil surface must be protected from abuse from excessive off-road vehicle use. Vehicles should be restricted to existing roads and trails on all public lands with the exception of the use of motorcycles and ATVs by land managers.

Proposed Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC's) should be screened to determine if this designation and the corresponding management restrictions are truly needed. One area located on public land managed by the Brownfield family brings up an

32-1 important question. That is, since the Brownfields are widely known to be excellent resource managers and through their management this area has reached its present high condition why does it need to be protected? I seriously doubt that anyone in your office knows as much about this area and how to most effectively manage it than the Brownfields. When you have an effective steward on the land just let them be.

I believe the reduction of black gramma use to 40% is merely the treatment of symptoms and not the treatment of the cause of overgrazing. I know of cases where utilization is over 60% and the

32-2 range has improved by every conceivable measurement. I would like to be provided with the research on which you base the need for a 40% utilization level on this species. Your office needs to address the level of management on public lands and not make blanket rules concerning plant use which effects good managers as well as the bad.

32-3 The BLM must decide what plant communities should be managed for on public lands. How can you criticize a manager for an adverse range trend when your office has no relevant goals to work

32-1 See response to Hearing Comment LC2-2.

32-2 See response to Comment 20-5.

32-3 The RMP will establish goals for desired plant communities as outlined in Chapter 2 under the Vegetation Management Concern for each Alternative. Each allotment will have specific objectives set for watershed, livestock, wildlife, and other resource uses as appropriate. The basis for the Desired Plant Community (DPC) concept was the soil/vegetation inventory done in the Resource Area in the late 1970's and early 1980's. As management plans are developed for each allotment, the DPC for that allotment will be included in the plan. The DPC identified for each range site will include watershed objectives and goals which can be achieved through vegetation manipulations such as livestock grazing and vegetation treatment.

32

towards. Again the primary measure of the desirability of a plant community should be the stability of the soil surface. A community cannot be desirable is it encourages soil erosion and water pollution.

I encourage the increased management of riparian and arroyo habitat, the importance of these areas cannot be overstated. However, we must develop management plans which are in the best interest of all parties involved. An example of this is the use of dormant season grazing instead of total livestock exclusion to rehabilitate riparian vegetation. This is a truly elegant solution to a range of riparian problems which addresses the concerns of all those involved. In the Mimbres Area much more emphasis should be placed on arroyo management. My own experiences lead me to believe that arroyos may be effectively managed in much the same way as riparian areas. With the cooperation of ranchers, biologists and the general public these areas could be a tremendous boost to wildlife populations and special status species. Related to this, I encourage the development of coherent habitat management plans. I am especially interested in the antelope plan proposed for northern Luna County, although I feel that the population goals for pronghorns is much too low.

32-4 I would like your office to develop a land disposal plan for Dona Ana county which would encourage development of land outside of Rio Grande Valley floor and stop the loss of agricultural lands. The further destruction of productive farm land and wildlife habitat by development although limited to private lands is to the serious detriment of the wildlife, agricultural and cultural resources of this area.

32-5 In closing, I am disappointed that this proposed RMP does not encourage good resource managers. All I can see is more regulation and less cooperation. Please tell me how you plan to encourage good resource managers including ranchers and how you plan to improve poor managers.

Sincerely,

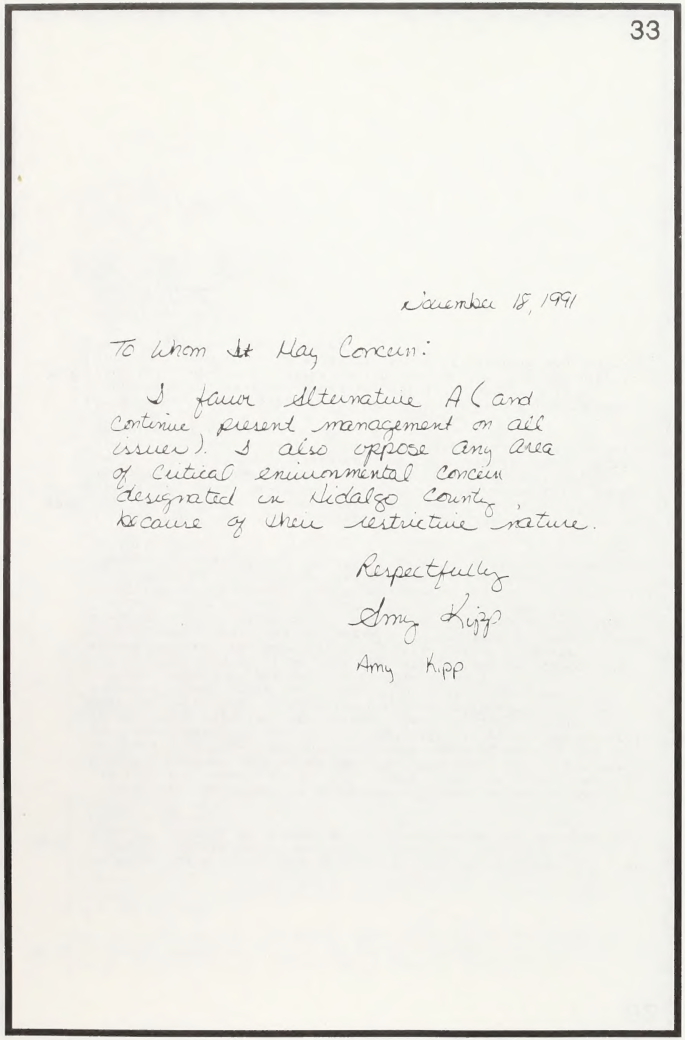
Jim Winder

Jim Winder

32-4 In this RMP/EIS, as in previous planning documents in the Mimbres Resource Area, public land on the mesa east of Las Cruces would be designated for disposal to allow for community expansion so the valuable farm lands in the Mesilla Valley might be protected.

32-5 The BLM believes that we have and will continue to make a long-term commitment to improving grazing management in the Mimbres Resource Area by bringing forward the existing grazing decisions based upon the Grazing Environmental Impact Statements, by conducting monitoring studies to set new goals and objectives for each grazing allotment, by spending Range Betterment monies on allotments which need improvement, and by bringing livestock carrying capacity in line with available forage. The good managers have been rewarded through increased livestock numbers, additional rangeland improvements, and improved range condition. All of these measures have been and will continue to be made in cooperation with the permittee.

33



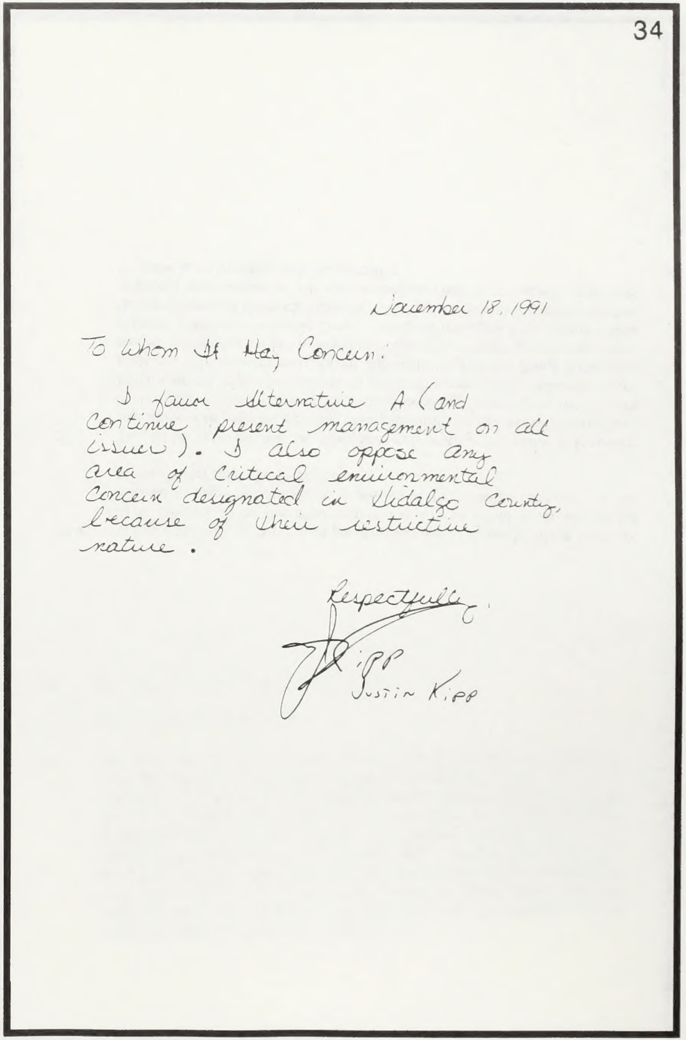
November 18, 1991

To Whom It May Concern:

I favor Alternative A (and continue present management on all issues). I also oppose any area of critical environmental concern designated in Hidalgo County because of their restrictive nature.

Respectfully
Amy Kipp
Amy Kipp

34



November 18, 1991

To Whom It May Concern:

I favor Alternative A (and continue present management on all issues). I also oppose any area of critical environmental concern designated in Hidalgo County, because of their restrictive nature.

Respectfully,
J Kipp
Justin Kipp

35

December 18, 1991

To Whom It May Concern:

I favor Alternative A (and Continue present management on all issues). I also oppose any area of Critical environmental Concern designated in Hidalgo County, because of their restrictive nature.

Respectfully,

Rex Kipp

Rex Kipp

39

NOV 1 9 1991

To Bureau of Land Management
Las Cruces District Office
1800 Marquess St.
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Subject: Comments on the Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement dated August 1991.

Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences of Mineral development on the land and on cultural and historical resources particularly.

39-1 We feel that the impact of mineral development on land is being vastly underestimated. The noise, dust, fumes, and the visual pollution inherent to a modern mining operation, seriously degrades the value of any nearby historical, paleontological or scenic resource. Even more disastrous is the impact of vibrations from blasting on old structures. We feel that provisions should be made for a buffer zone around all important historic, cultural or paleontological sites to protect them from the dangers posed by mining activities.

39-2 Environmental Consequences of Off Road Vehicle Use: We were shocked to find that according to the maps, the majority of areas are to be left with the "Open" designation. This allows Off Road Vehicles to legally drive anywhere they wish and is tantamount to approving the destruction of thousands of acres of Public Land every year, allowing it to be denuded of vegetation and eroded away. On semi-desert areas such as our allottment in the Pyramid Mountains, driving a vehicle off the road one time creates a set of tracks which can be seen for a year. Driving over those tracks three or four more times creates a very definite road with two ruts packed and hardened and vegetation mostly killed. If this new road is on a steep slope (and every ORV driver seems to feel challenged by a hill) the new road becomes twin gullies during the next rainy season. All too often the ORV drivers then decide to move over and create a new road because the first one is too rough. We see at least 5 miles of new "roads" of this sort created on our ranch every year.

39-3 We feel that a few areas, perhaps ones already devoted mainly to recreational use and not being utilized for their forage, should be set aside for use by ORV's. Then all other land in our delicate, semi-desert area should be "limited" with vehicles confined to designated roads and trails. Many of the current "roads" which serve no purpose should be officially closed. In a few cases, certain roads leading to heavily used parking areas on hilltops would have to be left open and equipped with signs against littering. A Public education program would have to be undertaken to inform people of the damage they can do with their vehicles.

39-1 The Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 (as amended), Public Law 167, Materials Act of 1947, and 43 CFR 3600 allow the BLM to have significant controls over the development of leasable and saleable minerals. The BLM mitigates potential adverse effects such as noise, dust, fumes, and visual pollution and provides buffer zones for cultural and paleontological values where appropriate.

The Federal mining laws provide for free and open exploration, development, and production of valuable locatable mineral deposits. 43 CFR 3802 and 3809 allow BLM to regulate such activities in a manner that prevents unnecessary or undue degradation of nonmineral resources.

39-2 Under the proposed action, only 16,190 acres would be designated as open to all vehicle use, while 133,470 acres would be closed, and the remaining 2,904,160 acres of public land would have vehicle use limited to either designated or existing roads. More significantly, there are currently 2,582,440 acres that are not designated. These undesignated lands have no restrictions to keep vehicles on roads, creating de facto open areas. The Proposed Plan or Alternatives B or C would eliminate undesignated land while restricting off-road travel to approximately 0.5 percent of the public land in the Resource Area. The purpose of these designations is to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation of soils and vegetation of the type you describe in your comments.

39-3 Vehicle management was one of the major issues raised in the scoping process to be addressed in this plan. The plan addressed which areas should be designated open to vehicle use and which should be limited or closed. The Aden Hills are proposed as an open area west of Las Cruces because of the varied terrain that could provide challenging trails for motorcyclists and other off-road vehicle recreationists. The southern Lordsburg Playa adjacent to Interstate 10 is proposed as an open area because of the traditional uses such as windsail and motorcycle racing.

39

Page 2

Public Access and Recreation are very important issues and we do not wish to underestimate them. However only a small part of those searching for recreation drive off-road and access by foot and horseback are just as important and far less destructive of soil, vegetation, natural resources and scenic beauty.

To summarize, we request that the BLM recognize the very serious problem presented by careless use of ORV's and designate most areas as "limited" or "closed" to off-road traffic.

Thank you.

Janaloo Hill Hough

Janaloo Hill Hough and Manny Hough
Shakespeare Ranch
Box 253
Lordsburg, NM 88045

40

Dear Sir:

I wish to make the following comments concerning the Draft Resource Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement for the Mimbres Resource Area. My comments are directed to the perferred Alternative D.

40-1 1. Under the section Continuing Management Guidance and Actions on page 2-21 you state that "a variety of grazing systems are available for consideration". You go on to state those that may be considered and the list is adequate. But, in alternative D you state that the limits of use on Black Grama will be 40%. That hardly allows the consideration of the variety of management systems that you state earlier are available. I wish the record to show that the 40% use level was set by research under grazing trials that do not represent the full spectrum of management potentials available today. Dr. Dick-Peddie, retired professor of botany at NMSU, said that after many years of research they still don't know how to manage Black Grama. He is correct! None of the research limited grazing time to very short periods. Long periods of rest followed by long periods of grazing with varying cow numbers and seasons of use characterized the research. Your use of the 40% criteria will continue this misuse of knowledge. I encourage you to adopt the criteria of minimum overgrazing for Alternative D. Over-grazing would be defined as the re-use of the individual plant prior to full recovery from previous use. I say minimum overgrazing because it is almost impossible to eliminate all overgrazing. This criteria is not specific to any particular plant and can be applied on a broad sprectum of plants. Adopting this criteria would allow many different management techniques to be applied to obtain the desired vegetative condition. It will also more closely follow the guidelines in the NEFMA Act.

40-2 2. Wildlife: I request that you forget poulation levels or goals. They are inaccurate by 50% under the best conditions. I propose that you incorporate vegetation conditions for the habitats that will be needed for the listed species. If you set use limits in these habitats then you will know how to advise the Department of Game and Fish on hunt recommendations. Since harvest is the only economic method of habitat management, use levels are appropriate here.

I am also concerned that you did not continue the need to bring the Ibex herd on the Florida Mountains under control in Alternative D. It was mentioned in Alternative B, it is necessary and should be repeated as a part of the perferred alternative. It is not necessary to completely remove the Ibex. Under proper levels they will have a positive influence on the quality of the browse on the mountain.

If you exclude livestock from key wildlife areas and do not

40-1 See response to Comment 20-5.

40-2 The BLM's Supplemental Program Guidance requires that RMPs address population goals for wildlife. When development of a proposed HMP begins, all habitat factors will be considered before a population goal is developed. These goals are not static and can be adjusted through time.

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have sufficient numbers of wildlife to keep the vegetation fresh

then the habitat will be adversely affected. I encourage you to adopt standards for livestock use in key wildlife areas that increases the nutritive quality of forage for wildlife. The exclusion of livestock is admitting that management is a failure.

3.Vegetation: Use no chemical treatments until all other reasonable alternatives have been evaluated. This is not a sustainable method of range management as the target species will return unless the cause has been eliminated.

40-3 Currently you are burning 300 acres of rangeland. I suspect that it is mostly grasslands growing in the bottoms of swales. You state that you want to chemically treat and burn at least 10,000 acres per year. This goal will require that you move your burning into the uplands characterized by Creosote bush. These vegetative types are largely deficit of adequate fuels to carry fire except for exceptional years of moisture. Burning these stands of Creosote may severely damage the water cycle due to the large extent of bare soil. Until grazing management is such that it will offset this undesirable effect of burning you should not increase your burning program by 10 times the current rate.

40-4 4. Cumulative Impacts: NEPA requires that you disclose the direct and indirect effects of the cumulative impacts. On reading this chapter I failed to see this clearly displayed. I am especially concerned as to what the effects of increasing tourism by $2 million will have on the support services of the BLM in the areas where this might take place. I am also concerned as to what the indirect effect will be on the communities of Hatch, Deming, and Lordsburg. I suspect that you can't tell but you should still make a guess.

The loss of $180,000 in livestock receipts is also a direct cumulative effect of the implementation of the preferred alternative. This should be explored just as vigorously as the issue of minerals was discussed. I believe that this plan can be appealed successfully on the issue of Cumulative Effects.

5. Vehicle Management: Until the BLM has the human resources necessary to adequately administer the vehicle management section of this alternative, I strongly urge you to delete this part of the alternative and replace it with the management in alternative A. You will create confusion and disrespect for your regulations unless you can enforce these proposals.

6. I support Alternative D if you incorporate some of the changes that I have offered. My support is based upon the fact that I believe that a holistic approach to land management will produce the desired condition. And I believe that a intensive approach to livestock management will also achieve the desired condition for land and people.

Charles McClure
PO Box 2809
Deming, NM 88031

40-3 Of the 300 acres burned, approximately 200 acres were desert mountain type and approximately 100 acres were grass bottomland type. Brush control on creosote uplands (of less than 10 percent slope) would be initially accomplished by herbicide application and not prescribed fire. Subsequent maintenance would be accomplished by grazing management and prescribed burning where feasible. The RMP states "burn or chemically treat a maximum of 10,000 acres per year." The plan does not state that we would increase our burning program by 10 times the current rate.

40-4 The direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts anticipated from continuing management guidance and implementing each alternative are discussed in Chapter 4. The cumulative impacts are integrated with the direct and indirect impact narratives and are then summarized on Final pages 4-52 and 4-53 (Draft pages 4-131 and 4-132). Both direct and indirect impacts, when taken in total, can become cumulative impacts. Only those resource values that were identified as having the potential of being significantly affected by cumulative impacts have been analyzed.

Impacts to social and economic conditions are described in Chapter 4 for each alternative. Under the Proposed Plan, recreational activities would generate approximately $2 million in gross receipts to local economies. The increase in annual recreation use fees collected (approximately $25,000) would offset increased costs to BLM. The majority of use would be in the Organ Mountains which is presently experiencing nearly 200,000 recreation visits annually. Other areas such as the Dona Ana Mountains, Fort Cummings, and the Gila Lower Box would experience increases in visits as facilities are developed. Facility development would be mainly of the primitive type. None of the areas would be developed to the degree of the Aguirre Spring Campground or Dripping Springs. Increased tourism should benefit local economies by increasing gross receipts without requiring additional services. The $180,000 loss in livestock receipts is a small percentage of the $24,000,000 in total income from cattle in the Mimbres Resource Area in 1989. Much of this "loss" is the result of continuing to exclude cattle from areas that are presently not being grazed.

GERALD A. STRAUSS
P.O. BOX 2019
LAS CRUCES, NM 88004

November 25, 1991

Tim Salt - Mimbres Resource Area Manager
RMP Team Leader
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Certified: P 878 873 361

Reference: Comments - Current Draft Mimbres Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and its attempt to integrate all resources into a single, unified land use plan.

Dear Mr. Salt:

The principle issue of my concern is Land Ownership Adjustments.

It is intended, when completed, the RMP will provide a comprehensive framework for managing and allocating public land and resources within the Mimbres Resource Area over the next twenty years.

As noted in the draft RMP/EIS a major driving force behind its preparation is the burgeoning population of the Las Cruces/El Paso areas and the resultant demands anticipated on public lands.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has developed four, well thought-out, alternatives, each a "package" of concerns and responses and presented as a blend of resource allocations and uses. However, there are some significant issues, although external to the BLM and its resources, and absent from the draft RMP/EIS which will have an profound impact on the entire area, including public lands.

The RMP acknowledges the "urban pressure" but does not give it enough weight when considering the BLM's policy to make public land and its resources available for use and development to meet national, regional and local needs, consistent with National objectives.

Everyday, local newspapers, television and radio report new or newly anticipated developments, changes and concerns for activities along the Texas, New Mexico, Chihuahua border. As a matter of fact, these issues are not merely local but rather national and international in scope and impact.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES EXTERNAL TO THE BLM AND ITS RESOURCES

Next week the President of the United States and the President of Mexico will be meeting for discussions on several topics, most importantly, that which most affects the Mimbres Resource Area of the BLM, the designation of an International Free Trade Zone. This zone is anticipated to include a broad area between the two new International Border crossings at Santa Teresa, the proposed Sunland Park International Border crossing, the East Potrillo Mountains, and the Mesilla Valley on the south, west and east of the International Free Trade Zone and both the Las Cruces airport and the Las Cruces Industrial Park on the north.

It is important for the RMP Team Leader to be aware of the International Free Trade Zone as well as the other circumstances, listed below, which will greatly affect the entire area.

It is not the intention of this letter-of-comments to include all actual and/or potential changes which should be considered by the BLM when completing the RMP/EIS, and its determinations for Land Ownership Adjustments, but it is intended to lead to the a determination for Land Ownership Adjustments different from any suggested in the four alternatives.

International Border Crossings: Development on both sides of the border will bring many thousands of people, new industries and all of the peripheral trappings. The cattle crossing is expected to open next month, December, 1991. New "twin-plant" operations are coming together, business leaders in Mexico are actively beginning the creation of a virtually new city, south and adjacent to the border between the West Potrillo Mountains and El Paso/Santa Teresa. It is expected that this new city will rival Ciudad Juarez (presently 1,000,000+/- inhabitants and one of the fastest growing cities in Mexico).

New Highways: There is a newly constructed New Mexico state highway which runs along the border from Santa Teresa, NM to Columbus, NM (approximately 60 miles just north of the border. There is a new highway under construction from the state highway to the new Port of Entry and soon to the cattle crossing. It is proposed to construct highways from the border to the Las Cruces Airport and the Las Cruces Industrial Park. It is also proposed to construct new highways from and to the Southern Dona Ana County Airport, Redd Road, Sunland Park, a couple of direct routes from the west mesa to Interstate Highway 10, and a multitude of other interconnections of and between all the above.

The Mexican side of the border is being developed in a manner similar to and reflecting what is happening in southern Dona Ana County. The Juarez-Palomas-Casas Grandes highway has been improved and will most likely serve as the main trunk for access to the new city (similar to Interstate Highway 10 in the US).

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Environmental Concerns: The problems and concerns which are so much in the public eye today related to the NU-MEX, Inc. proposal to establish a major disposal sight are just the beginning. Please refer to the photocopy of the front page of the November 20, 1991 Las Cruces Sun-News (attached to this letter). Again, it is not the purpose or this letter-of-comments to attempt to include all the possibilities, which may soon become realities and make great impressions in the area.

Another example of environmental impact, as is stated in the draft RMP/EIS is the degradation of air quality in portions of the resource area as a result of carbon monoxide from automobiles, blowing dust, smelters and increased use of unpaved roads near population centers. The southern part of the Mesilla Valley, from Las Cruces to El Paso has the poorest air quality in the resource area. Industrial pollutants and automobile exhaust from the densely populated El Paso/Ciudad Juarez vicinity contribute heavily to air pollution.

Water: As evidenced by the fact that the "El Paso Water Suit" involved 22 litigants from New Mexico and combined legal costs exceeding $20 million, water is maybe the greatest concern of all. Depending on which set of hydrological studies or groups of studies or averages of studies one chooses to give the most value, the number is about the same, there are about 100 million acre/feet of unappropriated ground water under the west mesa. A resource of this nature, size and location will eventually be developed, which should not be a surprise. However, there is a set of mysteries, including but not limited to who, how and when. The aquifer and its ability to deliver water belongs to the people of New Mexico and the rights (water rights) to extract water for beneficial use are awarded through a well established legal process, which is already "in-play". This sphere of circumstances is, in real terms, a "Split-Estate".

BLM CONSIDERATIONS FOR LAND OWNERSHIP ADJUSTMENTS

Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) (Public Law 94-579) provides authority for land ownership adjustments by sale, exchange, withdrawal and other means. The Act further requires that adjustments be made in conformance with existing land use plans.

Specific items to be examined while considering the merits of any disposal or acquisition action include:

1. Consistency and conformance with current planning.
2. Mineral resources.
3. Special status species plants or animals and their habitat.

page3

41

4. Recreation and wilderness values.
5. Prime and unique farmlands.
6. Floodplain/flood hazard evaluation.
7. Cultural and paleontological resource values.
8. Native American religious values.
9. Visual resources.
10. Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.
11. Wetlands and riparian areas.
12. Existing rights and uses.
13. Controversy.
14. Health and safety.
15. Adjacent uses and ownership.
16. Air resources.
17. Public interest.
18. Relative values.
19. Willingness to sell or exchange on the part of the landowner.

Laws such as FLPMA and the Federal Land Exchange Facilitation Act provide specific authority for land exchanges.

The emphasis for the exchange program in the Mimbres Resource Area is to acquire private and State trust lands in areas that have high resource values or unique characteristics that would enhance management of the public land, and dispose of public land that is valuable for urban expansion or other physical characteristics that make them difficult or uneconomical for the BLM to manage. Every effort is made to avoid creating split-estate lands when exchanging land. Existing split-estate lands will be exchanged if they meet FLPMA disposal criteria.

Prior to filing a formal written proposal, an informal discussion of the exchange proposal is held with the non-Federal party. Formal exchange proposals that are clearly not in the public interest are discouraged. Written proposals are reviewed to determine if the lands are covered by an approved RMP.

THE BLM RMP/EIS PROCESS

The BLM RMP process consists of nine basic steps. The process requires the use of an interdisciplinary team of resource specialists for completion of each step.

1. Identification of issues
2. Development of Planning Criteria
3. Inventory Data and Information Collection
4. Management Situation Analysis
5. Formulation of Alternatives
6. Estimation of Effects of Alternatives
7. Selection of Preferred Alternative
8. Selection of Resource Management Plan
9. Monitoring and Evaluation

page4

The all-important step 9 could become a cumbersome, burdensome, costly, time consuming and otherwise inhibiting factor in the prudent management of the resource.

> This step involves the collection and analysis of long-term resource condition and trend data to determine the effectiveness of the plan in resolving the identified issues, and to ensure that implementation of the plan is achieving the desired results. Monitoring continues from the time the RMP is adopted until changing conditions require a revision of the whole plan or any portion of it.

As mentioned above, the issue of concern expressed in these comments is Land Ownership Adjustments.

RMP decisions needed for this issue are:

- Which lands should the BLM acquire (by exchange, purchase, or donation) to consolidate its land pattern and to enhance multiple-use programs?
- Which lands should the BLM retain in public ownership?
- Which lands should the BLM dispose of and why?

RMP planning criteria for this issue are:

- Multiple-use values (whether or not significant or unique values exist).
- Service to the public (i.e., meeting community needs, etc.)
- Public interest and attitudes
- Existing land uses
- Surrounding land ownership patterns
- Adjacent land uses
- Need for public and administrative access
- FLPMA Section 203 sale criteria
  - parcels difficult and uneconomic to manage
  - purpose of previous acquisition is no longer required
  - disposal of a parcel will serve important public purposes
- Social and economic effects
- Effects on other resources and uses
- The degree to which changes in ownership will promote consolidation of public land without creating a scattered land pattern or split-estate
- Public health and safety

EXCHANGES

As written in the draft RMP/EIS there are ten basic procedures which will be followed for the various types of surface estate disposal actions in the Mimbres Resource Area.

Disposal by exchange must meet the criteria outlined in the Federal Land Policy and the Management Act (FLPMA) Sec 206, whereby it is determined that the public interest will be well served by making the proposed exchange. Exchanges outside of disposal areas may be possible if it is clearly determined that it is in the best interest of the public. Exchanges that would result in the acquisition of non-public lands in the disposal areas will not be considered. The following principles will guide the Mimbres Resource Area in its land exchange program.

1. The Mimbres Resource Area will continue to strive to process mutually benefitting, public interest land exchanges in a timely and efficient manner.

2. Acquisition (through exchange rather than purchase) of lands or interests in lands required for resource management programs will always be the preferred method of acquisition. This will reduce the expansion of Federal real estate holdings and help to ensure the integrity of State and local bases.

3. Comments from the state, local governments, and the general public shall be sought and considered before completion of each exchange.

4. Patent and deed reservations and conditions will be kept to the absolute minimum necessary to complete the transaction. Rights of third parties holding rights-of-way and other legal interests in the exchanged lands will be protected.

5. The generally preferred rule is for both surface and subsurface (mineral) estates to be traded in an exchange. However, due to third party encumbrances, or difficulties in the valuation process, it may be preferable to complete certain exchanges with reservations. Such exceptions to the generally preferred rule are to be made on a case-by-case basis.

6. Exchanges shall be utilized to consolidate or unite the surface and subsurface estates for both the Federal Government and the non-Federal owners in split or mixed estate situations.

7. Exchanges may be utilized to effect ownership and management area boundary changes and to form more logical and efficient land and resource management areas for both the BLM and non-Federal owners.

8. Whenever the law permits, expenses incurred by the BLM on exchange actions for the benefit of other Federal agencies shall be recovered from the benefitting agency. The BLM shall not attempt to recover nominal costs.

9. When the exchange involves the cancellation of a grazing permit or lease, the compensation for rangeland improvements and 2-year notification requirements of Section 402(g) of FLPMA and Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 4110 will be met.

10. The acquisition of non-public lands in special Management Areas of lands containing unique or unusual historic, cultural, mineral, recreational, scientific, scenic or wildlife habitat values will be pursued as a first priority. Likewise, proposals that would convey lands out of Federal ownership that possess special values will not be considered when formulating any exchange proposals.

ALLOTMENT CATEGORIZATION Category C (Custodial)

Management objectives:
--Prevent deterioration and manage in a custodial manner.

General characteristics:
--Present ecological range condition is variable.
--Vegetative production is relatively low.
--Limited potential for improvement.
--Limited or no resource conflicts exist with livestock grazing.
--No positive return on investment is likely.

Category criteria:
--An allotment must meet all of the following conditions:
1. Has a low potential for improvement in forage production.
2. Has no significant resource conflicts.

Management actions:
--Livestock use would remain the same, be excluded or authorized on a seasonal basis.
--High degree of management flexibility.
--Low intensity supervision and monitoring.

--Range improvement by private investment and range betterment funds.
--Development of management plans.

In a recent BLM review of the west mesa for purposes of Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) designations, it was found that the East Potrillo Mountains did not qualify because "the area does not meet any of the relevance and importance criteria because there are no significant resource qualities". The area between the East Potrillo Mountains and the Mesilla Valley was not even considered because of a pre-review dismissal due to "no significant resource qualities".

Desert Land Entries (DLE)

The USGS soil survey of Dona Ana County indicates that although the soil and other natural conditions of the west mesa support only 3.6 animal units per section (177.77 acres per cow). It would physically support an irrigated farming use. Additionally, the New Mexico State University has conducted economic feasibility studies relative to irrigated farming on the west mesa with favorable results. And finally, there are several, west mesa, successful irrigated farming operations in current use including the Corralitos Ranch (north of the Las Cruces Airport) where alfalfa and vegetables are produced, the Afton Station Farm where chile peppers and other valuable produce crops are grown and the A-G Sod Farm near the new Santa Teresa Port of Entry where sod has been produced for many years.

This provides strong evidence that the apparent summary decision during assessments for the Classification and Multiple Use Act that "no lands were found to be suitable for Desert Land Entries (DLE)" and the subsequent decision and that no proposals for such appropriations will be considered, was done in error and should be reconsidered.

Refer to regulations pertaining to: DISPOSITION; OCCUPANCY AND USE - DESERT LAND ENTRIES 43 CFR 2520. The Act of March 3, 1877 (19 Stat.377; 43 U.S.C. 321-323) as amended by the Act of March 3, 1891 (26 Stat.1096; 43 U.S.C. 321, 323, 325, 327-329), provides for the making of desert-land entries in New Mexico. The purpose of the statutes governing desert-land entries is to encourage and promote the reclamation, by irrigation, of the arid and semi-arid public lands of the Western States through individual effort and private capital.

After a careful review of the DLE Act, together with an equally careful review of west mesa portion of the Mimbres Resource Area, it is abundantly clear and evident that the west mesa, in fact does meet the qualifications of the DLE in at least three ways, legally, physically and in spirit.

41

RECOMMENDATIONS

41-1

1. **DESIGNATE THE WEST MESA FOR DISPOSAL THROUGH EXCHANGE, SALE OR DESERT LAND ENTRY.**

(BOUNDARY LINES FOR THE LANDS TO BE DESIGNATED FOR DISPOSAL WOULD BEGIN AT SANTA TERESA, PARALLEL THE BORDER TO THE WEST, FOLLOW THE EAST LINE OF THE EAST POTRILLO MOUNTAINS NORTH, AVOIDING THE KILBOURNE HOLE AREA, THE ADEN LAVA FLOW AND THE ADEN WSA, CONTINUE NORTH TO INCLUDE THE LAS CRUCES AIRPORT, INDUSTRIAL PARK AREAS, EAST TO THE MESILLA VALLEY AND SOUTH TO SANTA TERESA. ---BEGINNING AT T29S/R3E WEST TO T29S/R1W ON THE SOUTH AND AFTER INCLUDING MOST OF T28S/R1W, ANGLE NORTH AND EAST AND THEN NORTH THROUGH R2E AND R3E. ALL OF THE LAND DESCRIBED IS IN CATEGORY C (CUSTODIAL) ALLOTMENT CATEGORIZATION.)

- AVOID THE OBVIOUS NEED FOR NEAR-TERM REVISION OF THE MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA RMP/EIS.
- AVOID THE SEEMINGLY OVERWHELMING, INTIMIDATING AND DISCOURAGING IMPEDIMENT OF NON-FEDERAL OWNERS FROM CONSIDERING INITIATING AN EXCHANGE PROPOSAL.
- ENCOURAGE THE ORDERLY DISPOSITION OF PUBLIC LANDS WHICH ARE DIFFICULT AND UN-ECONOMICAL FOR THE BLM TO MANAGE, WHICH ARE SEVERELY ENCUMBERED BY SPLIT-ESTATE, WHICH MEET THE FLPMA DISPOSAL CRITERIA, WHICH MEET THE DLE REQUIREMENTS, WHICH ARE AND WILL BE INCREASINGLY SUBJECTED TO URBAN PRESSURE.
- PROVIDE A WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE FOR EXCHANGE THUS ENCOURAGING NON-FEDERAL OWNERSHIP TO COME FORWARD WITH PROPOSALS FOR EXCHANGE WITH LANDS HAVING HIGH RESOURCE VALUES AND/OR UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS THAT WOULD ENHANCE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC LAND AND CONTRIBUTE TO CONSOLIDATION.
- THE FOLLOWING DOES NOT EXIST TO THE EXTENT OF BEING INCONSISTENT WITH DISPOSAL (SEE DRAFT MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA RMP/EIS):
  - MINERAL RESOURCES
  - SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES PLANTS OR ANIMALS AND THEIR HABITAT
  - RECREATION AND WILDERNESS VALUES
  - PRIME AND UNIQUE FARMLANDS
  - FLOODPLAIN/FLOOD HAZARD EVALUATION
  - CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCE VALUES
  - NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS VALUES
  - VISUAL RESOURCES
  - AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN
  - WETLANDS AND RIPARIAN AREAS
  - EXISTING RIGHTS AND USES
  - CONTROVERSY
  - HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS
  - ADJACENT USES AND OWNERSHIP
  - AIR RESOURCES
  - PUBLIC INTEREST

41-1 In past plans, several thousand acres of public land on the West Mesa were identified for disposal to allow for the development of Santa Teresa, Las Cruces Industrial Park, the Southern New Mexico Prison Facility, the community of Fairacres, and the Las Cruces Airport. Most of this land has been transferred out of Federal ownership but has not been developed.

Only small isolated parcels of public land on the West Mesa are identified for disposal in the proposed plan because the public land is well-blocked except for some State parcels which have been identified for acquisition. Because of the large number of acres previously disposed of on the West Mesa, we consider this sufficient for this 20-year period. The proposed plan did identify public land for disposal on the East Mesa because that is the growth path for Las Cruces.

The Mimbres Resource Area has had an active exchange program which we hope to continue in the future. Exchanges have helped the BLM acquire land in the Organ Mountains Recreation Area and Aguirre Spring Recreation Area. Direct purchase has been used to acquire land along the Gila River (Lower Box). The Mimbres Resource Area plans to continue to make land adjustments using these programs.

All lands not identified for disposal in the RMP will be retained in public ownership and managed for multiple use. Therefore, no applications will be accepted for disposal under the Desert Land Act.

41

2. **ENCOURAGE NON-FEDERAL OWNERS TO PARTICIPATE IN A PRUDENT LAND OWNERSHIP ADJUSTMENT PLAN.**

41-2 (IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THERE ARE A NUMBER OF NON-FEDERAL OWNERS WHO HAVE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN EXCHANGES OF THEIR LANDS, MUCH OF WHICH WOULD BE CONSIDERED HIGHLY DESIRABLE BY THE BLM AND CERTAINLY MORE SO THAN THE WEST MESA. SOME NON-FEDERAL OWNERS HAVE APPROACHED THE BLM, HOWEVER WITH THE PRESENT PERCEPTION OF "ENDLESS REDTAPE" MANY HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO COME FORWARD. IF THE WEST MESA WERE TO BE DESIGNATED FOR DISPOSAL IT WOULD OFFER MUCH IN THE WAY OF OPPORTUNITY, BOTH FOR NON-FEDERAL OWNERS AND THE BLM ALIKE.)

Sincerely,

Gerald A. Strauss

41-2 The exchange of public land does take a longer period of time to complete than an exchange between private parties. By law, the Bureau must determine that the public interest will be well served by making an exchange, which is not necessary in an exchange between private parties.

To be in the public interest, the public land conveyed cannot have higher resource values than the non-Federal land acquired. Non-profit groups have assisted the Bureau in purchasing private land with exceptional resource values (such as the Cox Ranch located in the proposed Organ Mountain National Conservation Area) and obtaining contracts for public land that has been identified for disposal. These types of exchanges and the passage of the Federal Land Exchange Facilitation Act of 1988 should streamline and facilitate land exchange procedures.

Las Cruces Sun-News

Vol. 111—No. 234 Wednesday, November 20, 1991 35 Cents

Problems on the border?

Hazardous waste trucks would use Santa Teresa

By Keith Whelpley
Of the Sun News

Hazardous waste from Mexico may be shipped through the Santa Teresa border crossing and snake through southern Dona Ana County communities if a plan is approved by the U.S. Customs Service.

The customs office in El Paso said the plan is to discontinue shipping the waste across the international bridge in El Paso and instead move it through the Santa Teresa crossing once it opens sometime after the first of January.

Ken Squires, chief customs inspector for cargo operations in El Paso, said the customs office hasn't approved the plan yet but is looking at architectural plans for Santa Teresa.

Currently, a steady flow of trucks containing hazardous waste from twin plants cross the crowded international bridge in El Paso, Squires said. Though there is an inspector dedicated to those vehicles, the bridge has no containment facilities in case of spills, which are infrequent — one per year at the bridge.

Also, Squires said no emergency teams are on site to handle the waste should there be problems.

The plan is to move trucks carrying hazardous waste away from the crowds of commuter traffic and into an area with fewer people, he said. The closest crossing in a relatively unpopulated area is Santa Teresa.

Don Brooks said he was informed about three weeks ago about the plan and discussed traffic routing with Gov. Bruce King's office.

King and his entourage were in southern New Mexico Tuesday to look at the progress of the border crossing.

The governor met with Brooks and other county officials at a luncheon and discussed public infrastructure.

King's office has focused its attention on infrastructure to serve private industry along the border. The idea is, according to spokesman John McKean, that once a crossing is open and commerce is generated it will translate into better public services.

Brooks said, however, the county can't wait for that to happen to deal with hazardous waste expected to begin moving once the crossing opens.

"My understanding is that El Paso has one spill a week. We've got to plan for that," Brooks said.

The manager said he's not comfortable with the current road system that will have to bear the weight of semi trucks.

"Hazardous waste comes through Dona Ana County all the time. But now we have to be concerned with getting it from Santa Teresa to the interstates."

Tony Otero, Dona Ana County Civil Preparedness director, said he, under the direction of Brooks, has set up a committee to identify a route for shipping the waste on existing roads.

Please see King, Page 3A

Governor Bruce King talks to workers Tuesday afternoon on the Mexican side of the new border crossing near Santa Teresa. It is scheduled to open next year.

Weather

Mostly sunny today and Thursday, with mostly clear skies at night. Highs in the upper 60s today with overnight lows in the mid 20s. Weather diary Page 2A.

What's inside

Swamped: The Las Cruces office of the New Mexico Department of Labor has been swamped by many of the 600 city residents eligible for extended unemployment benefits. (State/Local 4A)

Turkey hearts: It's not easy being a turkey, especially during the holiday season. However, 843,000 of the birds die annually of heart attacks before they ever reach the chopping block. Scientists at Penn State University are using EKGs to learn why. (Page 9A)

Success: Defense has been the key for the Onate football team's success during the last two seasons and the Knight defenders will face quite a challenge on Saturday against the Artesia Bulldogs. (Sports 1B)

Index

Around Las Cruces	6B
Bridge	6B
Classifieds	7-10B
Comics	6B
Crossword	6B
Dear Abby	6B
Deaths	8A
Editorial	10A
Horoscope	6B
Movies	6B
Sports	1-3B

King

From Page 1A

Currently it's unknown if the county will have to spend money to upgrade roads or bridges to handle the large waste-carrying trucks.

Brooks said no money has been budgeted for road improvements and if improvements are needed, the county wouldn't have money anyway.

Dona Ana County's financial woes surfaced again this week when county commissioners at a work session said they couldn't provide the number of sheriff's cars they had approved last summer.

County money problems related to the border crossing came up several months ago when the county couldn't come up with $50,000 for its share of a state paving project for the road leading to the border crossing.

The paving project was one initiated by the governor's office in an agreement with the governor of Chihuahua, Mexico. The state had the money, but the county, without an approved budget, didn't.

County officials said they could pay for the project if they could pay later, and the state agreed.

While the county appears to share the state's enthusiasm for opening the border crossing, it has trouble when the state has asked it for money.

King said yesterday at the border that there has been confusion in the county over what it's role is in the border development.

He said he thinks it's being worked out.

42

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

We would like to convey our comments regarding the proposed Range Management Plan in our district. We feel that Alternative A is the plan to be most favorable in our opinion. There are areas of the other plans which we feel strongly objective to, thus Alternative A would be the plan we would like to show our support on.

Sincerely,

Pecos and Darr Shannon

Pecos and Darr Shannon
P.O. Box 446
Lordsburg, NM 88045

43

November [illegible]

Richard Searle
South Animas [illegible]
Lordsburg, NM [illegible]

RMP Team Leader
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Sir;

In regards to the Draft Resource Management Plan developed for the Mimbres Resource Area. I would like to comment on several of the issues addressed in this plan.

LANDS TO ACQUIRE: I feel that the U.S. Government already owns too much land in New Mexico and I am opposed to the B.L.M. acquiring any additional land in the Mimbres Resource Area. I have no problem with the B.L.M. disposing of unmanageable tracts.

OFF ROAD MANAGEMENT: There are problems in the Resource Area with vehicles driving off roads. I feel that the B.L.M. should impose some control over recreational off road use on all B.L.M. administered lands.

ACCESS: There are legitimate reasons to prevent indiscriminate access to public lands. These include the protection of wildlife and archeological sites on B.L.M. lands. Permittees and inholders should also have the right to protect their private property on or surrounded by B.L.M. lands. I oppose any condemnation of private property to provide access to public lands.

ACEC: The B.L.M. should identify these areas in the Resource Area. No current management of these areas should be changed unless there is documented and verified deterioration of the areas.

Except for uncontrolled off road vehicular travel, I feel that the current management of the Resource Area has been adequate and has resulted in an improving trend in the B.L.M. administered lands.

Sincerely,

Richard Searle

Richard Searle

46

FRANKLIN
MOUNTAINS
WILDERNESS
COALITION

November 22, 1991

Mr. Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Re: Draft Mimbres Resource Management Plan
and Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Tim:

The Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition consists of 16 Texas and New Mexico organizations and numerous individuals united in their desire to see the scenic beauty and wilderness character of the Franklin Mountains protected. Since the Draft Mimbres Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) includes guidance for future management of the New Mexico portion of the Franklins, we have studied the document carefully. We offer the following comments as further amplification on our statement presented at the hearing on the Draft RMP/EIS held in Las Cruces on October 22.

As I stated at the public hearing, the Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition generally believes Alternative B provides the best guidance for future management of BLM lands in the Mimbres Resource Area, including the New Mexico portion of the Franklins. With regard to the Franklins, we are pleased the Preferred Alternative (Alternative D) is in many ways similar to Alternative B. In particular, we support:

- establishment of an Organ/Franklin Mountains Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC);

- withdrawal of the ACEC from locatable mineral entry;

46

- closure of the ACEC to fluid mineral leasing (including geothermal leasing) and mineral material sales; and

- retention in BLM ownership of 640 acres near Berino that support the largest known population of Opuntia arenaria. This land will be an important addition to the protected corridor between the Organ and Franklin mountains.

We urge that all of these elements remain in the final plan.

46-1 The main area where we believe the Preferred Alternative can be improved with respect to the Franklins is in retention of lands in BLM ownership. Currently, all BLM land adjacent to the proposed ACEC on the east side of the Franklins is identified as suitable for disposal. We propose that an additional 2,310 acres of land in this area (location map and legal description enclosed) be identified for retention.

Our proposal would result in BLM retaining essentially all of the land between the Franklins and the powerline east of the mountains. (The area we recommend retaining includes all quarter sections that are completely west of the powerline.)

We think there are a number of compelling reasons for retaining these lands:

- Most importantly, they will provide the Franklins a wider buffer against future development. The northern portion of the Franklins may seem isolated today, but the time will come when this area will experience development pressure similar to that now felt closer to Las Cruces and El Paso. Today, we have the opportunity to establish a suitable buffer with minimal difficulty; we won't have this opportunity tomorrow.

  North of the Franklins, the Preferred Alternative includes retention of an additional 3,840 acres adjacent to the proposed ACEC to provide a

---

46-1 See response to Hearing Comment LC1-1.

46

Mr. Tim Salt
November 22, 1991
Page 3

wider buffer at the foot of the Organs. A similar retention is justified on the east side of the Franklins.

- The area in question will add to the topographic and biological diversity of the retained lands by including larger portions of the alluvial fans on the east side of the mountains.

- The area includes potential habitat for several sensitive plant species, including Opuntia arenaria, Cereus greggii and Coryphantha scheeri.

- 46-2 Finally, on the New Mexico-Texas state line, there would be a better match between the retained BLM lands and the east boundary of Franklin Mountains State Park. Currently, the east boundary of the Park is just over 0.6 mile east of the boundary for the area BLM has identified for retention or acquisition. If BLM retains the additional lands we propose in Sec. 31, T-26-S, R-5-E, the two boundaries would be less than 0.15 mile apart.

Overall, BLM has done excellent work on the Draft Mimbres RMP/EIS, and we look forward to seeing the final document. Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

John Sproul

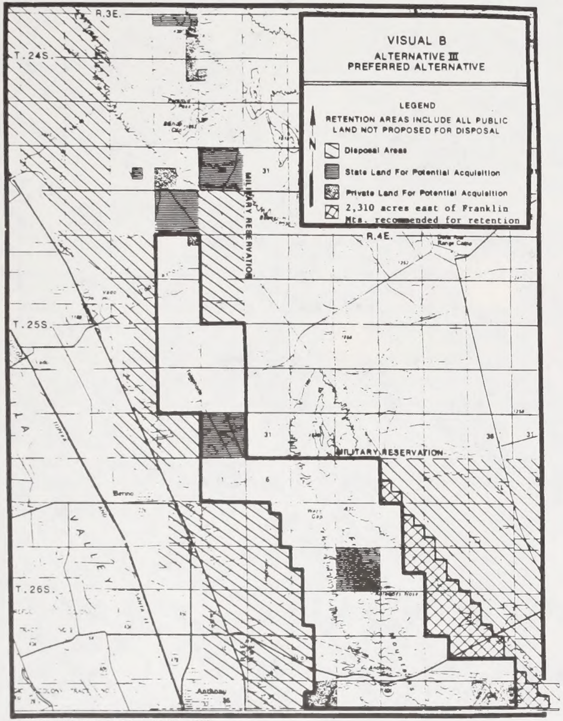
John Sproul
President
601 W. Yandell #25
El Paso, TX 79902
915/545-5157

Enclosures

1. Map showing 2,310 acres recommended for retention
2. Legal description of 2,310 acres

46-2 See response to Hearing Comment LC1-1.

46


VISUAL B
ALTERNATIVE III
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE
LEGEND
RETENTION AREAS INCLUDE ALL PUBLIC LAND NOT PROPOSED FOR DISPOSAL
N
Disposal Areas
State Land For Potential Acquisition
Private Land For Potential Acquisition
2,310 acres east of Franklin Mts. recommended for retention
R.3E.
R.4E.
T.24S.
T.25S.
T.26S.
MILITARY RESERVATION
MILITARY RESERVATION
31
31
36
31
6
Berino
VALLEY
Anthony
Mountains

SOURCE: USDI BLM Las Cruces District, 1986

101 Map Pocket)

46

Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition

2,310 Acres East of Franklin Mountains
Recommended for Retention in BLM Ownership

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

T 26 S R 4 E

Sec. 3:	W½SW¼, SE¼SW¼	120
10:	SE¼, SW¼NE¼	200
11:	SW¼SW¼	40
14:	SW¼, W½NW¼, SE¼NW¼, SW¼SE¼	320
15:	NE¼	160
23:	all	640
24:	W½SW¼, SE¼SW¼, SW¼NW¼	160
25:	NW¼, W½NE¼	240
26:	NE¼	160

T 26 S R 5 E

Sec. 30:	SW¼SW¼	40
31:	lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, E½NW¼, SW¼NE¼	230
		2,310

48

United States Department of the Interior

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
RESTON, VA 22092

In Reply Refer To:
Mail Stop 423
DES 91

NOV 3 0 1991

Memorandum

To: Resource Management Plan Team Leader, Bureau of Land Management, Las Cruces, New Mexico

From: Assistant Director for Engineering Geology

Subject: Draft Resource Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement of Mimbres Resource Area

We have reviewed the subject document and our comments are as follow:

48 1 Ground water used for livestock and wildlife could be contaminated by herbicides used for chemical brush control which might enter the shallow groundwater systems.

Most of the aquifer recharge occurs along permeable streambeds described only as alluvial deposits. No quantitative information is presented regarding the occurrence of ground water, such as depth to water or thickness of the unsaturated zone. The document does not address the possibility of residual herbicide chemicals being deposited within the unsaturated zone.

Gene Roseboom for

James F. Devine

Copy to: District Chief, New Mexico

48-1 The following vegetation treatment parameters are taken from the Final EIS for vegetation treatment on public land (USDI 1991):

"Vegetation treatment methods are selected based on several important parameters that include (1) the characteristics of the target plant species (size, distribution, density, and life cycle); (2) associated plant species; (3) the land use of the target area; (4) the size, slope, accessibility, and soil characteristics (rockiness and erodibility) of the area to be treated; (5) climatic conditions present at the time of treatment (for example, wind speed, precipitation, or season); (6) the proximity of the area targeted for vegetation treatment to sensitive areas (for example, threatened and endangered plant or animal habitat, riparian zones, significant aquatic resources and unstable watersheds, or areas of human or livestock habitation); (7) need for subsequent revegetation, and (8) time of year treatment could occur. Site-specific analyses consider all these factors before a treatment method is selected." In addition, all areas considered for herbicide application would be evaluated in terms of the EPA's DRASTIC Index that estimates the potential vulnerability to groundwater contamination.

While the Draft RMP/EIS identified many areas for possible treatment, we would not treat any area before a site-specific analysis is completed. Copies of the Final EIS for vegetation treatments are available at any BLM office.

49

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, N.M. 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

It is recognised that the Draft Mimbres Resource Area Management Plan Environment Impact Statement represents a great deal of work. And since it was more than two years in the making it is difficult to adequately comment on it in a few weeks in ones spare time.

49-1 However, in general, although Issue 2 is dealt with in some biological detail, under the category of "which public lands should be identified for other forms of special management" should be included biologically oriented management categories like minimum or no-use areas. Also under "Planning Criteria" the consideration of "Resource Values" is too ambiguous and consideration for current and potential wildlife habitat should be added.

49-2 Issue 1 is far too general. Under "Planning Criteria" there should be specific biological planning criteria not all of it lumped under "other resources and uses." Things like effects on distribution and habitat of state and federally listed species, effects on vegetative communities of non-listed species, effects on water quality, effects on watershed condition,

49-1 The Needed Decisions and Planning Criteria listed under each Issue and Management Concern in Chapter 1 were subject to public review and comment during the Scoping Process in 1989. A scoping report which outlined issues, management concerns, and planning criteria was issued prior to five public meetings held in July 1989. A follow-up report was issued in November 1989 which contained revisions based upon public review and comment. The revised issues, concerns, and planning criteria provided the framework for the entire planning process which followed. Revising any of the issues, concerns, or planning criteria at this time would change the entire scope of the RMP. Therefore, public comment at this stage is primarily directed at seeking input on how well the alternatives resolve the stated issues and concerns, relative to the planning criteria.

49-2 See response to Comment 49-1.

effects on wilderness integrity etc.

49-3 Under Issue 3, once again, livestock management, law enforcement and mineral exploration, etc are spelled out under "planning criteria" while all biological considerations are lumped under "other resources". This is afterall an Environmental Impact Statement, specific biological concerns must be split out as criteria for evaluation.

Issue 4 suffers from the same lack of specific biological concerns. Overall, with the exception of Issue 2 which includes less than 10% of the Resource Area, this fundamental part of this document minimizes if not overlooks environmental criteria as concerns and does not live up to the intent of an EIS.

49-4 Under "management concerns" I am also bothered by questions asked under "Concern 5". Population goals imply static populations. Both populations and habitats flucuate and evolve, setting of "goals" will interfer with this natural dynamic process. The questions should be re-asked and answered with this dynamic state in mind.

49-5 Also under "Planning Criteria" of Concern 5, how can you evaluate existing HMP's without evaluating exiting grazing plans. Various existing plans must be re-evaluated in a new RMP in order to have a valid EIS. Each of these plans should be a management concern. Only in that way can the impacts on the environment of all the management strategies in the resource area be evaluated both individually and cumulatively.

49-3 See response to Comment 49-1.

49-4 See response to Comment 40-2.

49-5 Existing HMPs considered all uses of public land in those areas. At the time of evaluation, all aspects of the Plan, as well as the current uses of the land which affect wildlife and habitat, will be scrutinized to determine if the HMP goals are being met. Problems identified, if any, would be addressed in the evaluation. Livestock grazing is not necessarily a concern in HMP implementation.

49

3

Unfortunately I think the above concerns must be addressed and a true Environmental Impact Statement be issued before a reader can make meaningful comments. However, of the four alternatives listed the only one that represents a good beginning for a plan is alternative B. Unfortunately you have mistakenly not chosen this one.

I was happy to see the areas listed as proposed ACEC's under Alternative B. Livestock should be eliminated in all ACEC's. I would like to point out that over 85% of the 320,000 acres of ACEC's in Alternative B are listed in the New Mexico Wilderness Coalition wilderness proposal as wilderness areas. When these areas become wilderness the ACEC status should be maintained. In some cases ACEC status may provide protection that wilderness does not, for example livestock grazing. 49-6

I also like the plan to restrict vehicles to designated roads, however, it should also include how you are going to designate roads. Does this mean all currently existing roads? How will you identify roads? How will you enforce this regulation? You must evaluate the need of each existing road and close all but the necessary ones before any consideration is made to create new access roads. 49-7 The lands along the border subject to vehicle closure in Alternative D should be included in Alternative B. One of the most devastating things that can be done to a habitat is providing vehicle access. The environ-

49-6 See response to Comment 29-3.

49-7 In areas where vehicle use is limited to designated roads and trails, individual roads will be signed as either open or closed. Such a designation is a very labor intensive management scheme that will require frequent patrols and sign replacement or repair. In areas designated as existing roads and trails, only the area will be signed. Closed roads may require additional rehabilitation measures such as ripping and reseeding or construction of vehicle barriers such as berms or rock piles. These designations would take effect as soon as the plan is finalized and a Federal Register notice is published. Existing roads can be identified from aerial photography with ground truthing. Master maps of existing roads will be kept by the BLM, with regular reviews to determine problem areas that will need more frequent patrols to promote compliance. Road closures will need to be analyzed beforehand in an Environmental Assessment to ensure that the action taken is in the best interests of the public.

mental impact of each road in the Resource Area must be assessed.

The two areas open to all vehicle use should not be disposed of but should be maintained as is. No new all vehicle use areas should be opened. Any roads created for livestock or locatable mineral resources should be closed and rehabilitated when the activity is completed. If the Forest Service can do this then there is no reason BLM can't do it.

By all means remove the Ibex from the Floridas

Foot access should not be developed in the Organ Needles and Pena Blanca areas. The arguement that development will disperse users over a larger area is misleading. In reality it will eliminate currently participating users and bring in large numbers of users who would not normally use the area which is too fragile to handle this pressure. Your management responsibitty is to protect these areas, development will not accomplish this.

No treatment of vegetation should be conducted until the causes of vegetation degradation have been corrected. Without this we are committed to expensive continuous treatment. Why go thru the cost of controlled burns without correcting the problem. No chemical means should be used for vegetation control.

Elimination of grazing in areas where Bighorn sheep are found is a positive step, however, Bighorn sheep occupy more than 12,000 acres of the Peloncillos Mountains.

The best management for this Resource Area is found in Alternative B. The problems with Alternative D are all these areas where it deviates from Alternative B. In each case these deviations result in less than desirable management of the resource or in many cases disastrous results. I urge you to change your preferred Alternative to Alternative B with the above mentioned changes and additions

Sincerely

Robert Tafanelli

50

TEXAS
PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT
4200 Smith School Road • Austin, Texas 78744 • 512-389-4800

ANDREW SANSOM
Executive Director

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WALTER UMPHREY
Beaumont

November 22, 1991

Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Dear Sirs:

As the managing agency for the Franklin Mountains State Park, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has reviewed the Mimbres Resource Area Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. The effort put forth by the Las Cruces District Office, to plan the management activities of the vast natural and cultural resources of the Franklin and Organ Mountains, is to be commended.

The Department's primary interest is in maintaining the natural and cultural resource links in the Franklin Mountain chain between New Mexico and Texas. That link is especially critical to the long term well being of established wildlife populations and plant communities. It is our recommendation that the widest possible common boundary between BLM administered lands and the existing Franklin Mountains State Park be maintained.

50-1 The Department is also interested in a cooperative effort that will result in providing educational and interpretive resource based outdoor experiences. This would include the establishment of a long distance trail linking the Franklin and Organ Mountains.

Related to the Department's management of Franklin Mountains State Park, alternatives C, B and D provided protection and management, as well as public use, which may meet many common goals of both states. Although with the exception of providing a maximum common boundary, alternative B seems to protect and manage the resources to the greatest extent, while alternative D would allow increased public use, while also providing the greatest resource protection.

50-1 A long-distance hiking trail linking the Organ and Franklin Mountains is included in the existing Organ Mountains Coordinated Resource Management Plan and will be completed by 1998 if funding allows. Interpretive opportunities will abound along the trail and be coordinated with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, particularly toward the New Mexico/Texas State line.

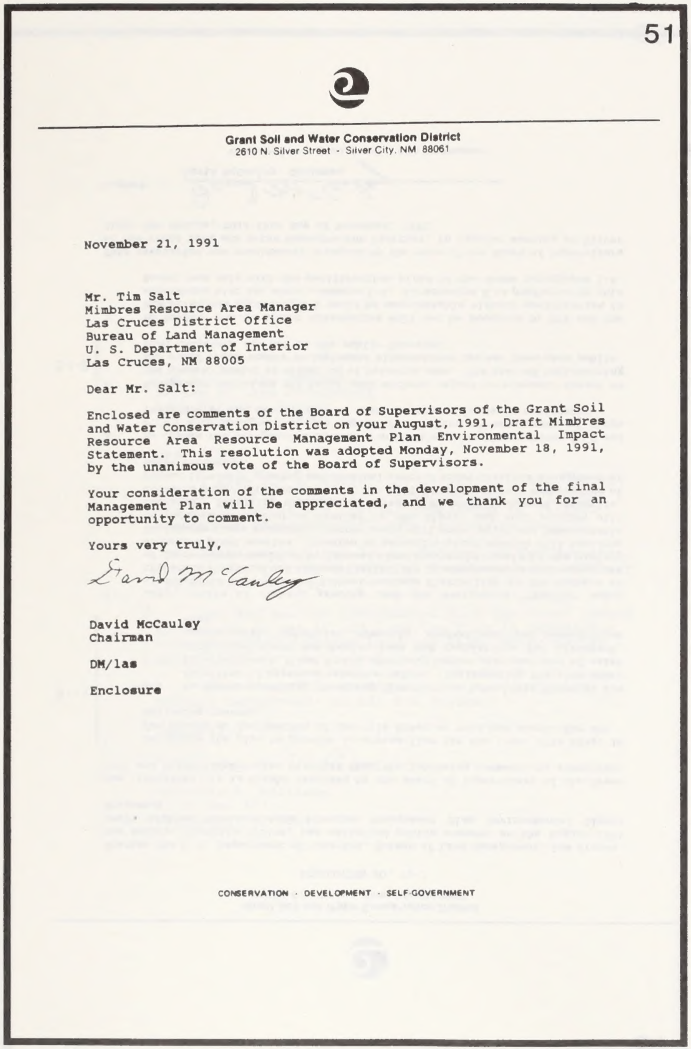
50

Bureau of Land Management
Page 2
November 22, 1991

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on your draft plan and look forward to a continued close working relationship.

Sincerely,

Jim Carrico
Trans-Pecos Planning & Development Coordinator
HCR 70, Box 375
Terlingua, Texas 79852



51

Grant Soil and Water Conservation District
2610 N. Silver Street - Silver City, NM 88061

November 21, 1991

Mr. Tim Salt
Mimbres Resource Area Manager
Las Cruces District Office
Bureau of Land Management
U. S. Department of Interior
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

Enclosed are comments of the Board of Supervisors of the Grant Soil and Water Conservation District on your August, 1991, Draft Mimbres Resource Area Resource Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement. This resolution was adopted Monday, November 18, 1991, by the unanimous vote of the Board of Supervisors.

Your consideration of the comments in the development of the final Management Plan will be appreciated, and we thank you for an opportunity to comment.

Yours very truly,

David McCauley

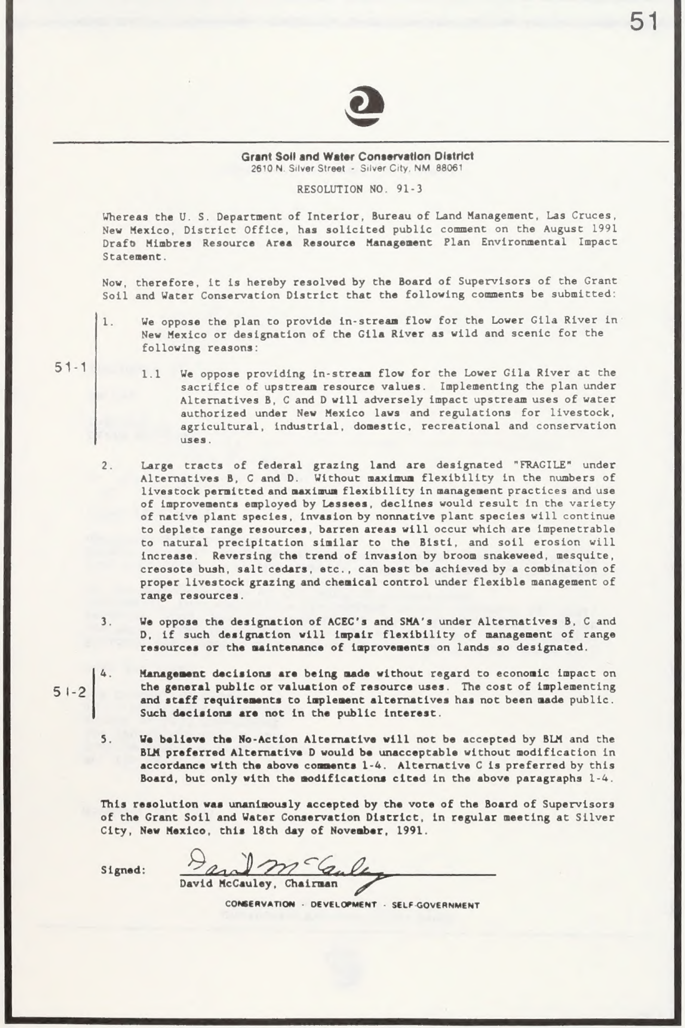
David McCauley
Chairman

DM/las

Enclosure

CONSERVATION · DEVELOPMENT · SELF-GOVERNMENT

51



Grant Soil and Water Conservation District
2610 N. Silver Street - Silver City, NM 88061

RESOLUTION NO. 91-3

Whereas the U. S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Las Cruces, New Mexico, District Office, has solicited public comment on the August 1991 Drafb Mimbres Resource Area Resource Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement.

Now, therefore, it is hereby resolved by the Board of Supervisors of the Grant Soil and Water Conservation District that the following comments be submitted:

51-1

1. We oppose the plan to provide in-stream flow for the Lower Gila River in New Mexico or designation of the Gila River as wild and scenic for the following reasons:

   1.1 We oppose providing in-stream flow for the Lower Gila River at the sacrifice of upstream resource values. Implementing the plan under Alternatives B, C and D will adversely impact upstream uses of water authorized under New Mexico laws and regulations for livestock, agricultural, industrial, domestic, recreational and conservation uses.

2. Large tracts of federal grazing land are designated "FRAGILE" under Alternatives B, C and D. Without maximum flexibility in the numbers of livestock permitted and maximum flexibility in management practices and use of improvements employed by Lessees, declines would result in the variety of native plant species, invasion by nonnative plant species will continue to deplete range resources, barren areas will occur which are impenetrable to natural precipitation similar to the Bisti, and soil erosion will increase. Reversing the trend of invasion by broom snakeweed, mesquite, creosote bush, salt cedars, etc., can best be achieved by a combination of proper livestock grazing and chemical control under flexible management of range resources.

3. **We oppose the designation of ACEC's and SMA's under Alternatives B, C and D, if such designation will impair flexibility of management of range resources or the maintenance of improvements on lands so designated.**

51-2

4. **Management decisions are being made without regard to economic impact on the general public or valuation of resource uses. The cost of implementing and staff requirements to implement alternatives has not been made public. Such decisions are not in the public interest.**

5. **We believe the No-Action Alternative will not be accepted by BLM and the BLM preferred Alternative D would be unacceptable without modification in accordance with the above comments 1-4. Alternative C is preferred by this Board, but only with the modifications cited in the above paragraphs 1-4.**

This resolution was unanimously accepted by the vote of the Board of Supervisors of the Grant Soil and Water Conservation District, in regular meeting at Silver City, New Mexico, this 18th day of November, 1991.

Signed: David McCauley
David McCauley, Chairman

CONSERVATION · DEVELOPMENT · SELF-GOVERNMENT

51-1 New Mexico State law does not currently recognize instream flow as a valid use of water. It is possible that State Law will change to recognize instream flows as has happened in most other western states within the past few years. If State law is changed to recognize instream flows, the BLM will attempt to secure instream flows in the Gila River for the protection of natural resource values. These resources include water quality; endangered fish, reptile, and bird habitat; riparian values; recreational fishing opportunities; wilderness values; and potential wild, scenic, or recreational river values.

51-2 The social and economic impacts of implementing each alternative are discussed in Chapter 4 of the Draft RMP/EIS. A social and economic profile of the Resource Area is also contained in Chapter 3 (Affected Environment of the Draft RMP/EIS). It is assumed that funding and staffing would be obtained to implement the Proposed Plan. If funding is not received, implementation would be delayed or would not occur.

52

November 22, 1991

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Sir:

I deem BLM's present involvement in land use in Hidalgo County sufficient governmental involvement and would oppose any further broadening of federal government management of lands in Hidalgo County.

I also oppose any Areas of Critical Environmental Concern designation in Hidalgo County because of their restrictive nature.

52-1 The BLM has not coordinated with the local county government to see if its Land Use Plan is compatible with the Hidalgo County Land Use Plan, which is required by law.

Therefore, I favor Alternative A (continuing present management) on all the issues.

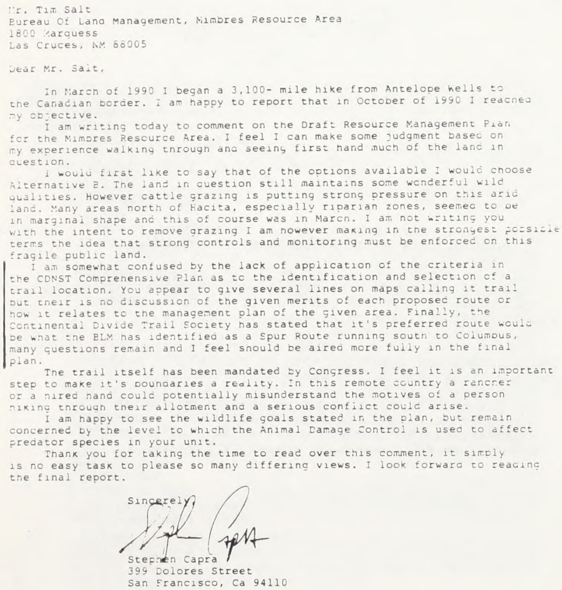
Sincerely,

Patricia K Williams

Patricia K. Williams
P. O. Box 551
Lordsburg, NM 88045

52-1 At the beginning of the planning process in 1989, BLM met with local, city, and county governments in the planning area (including Hidalgo County) to discuss development of the RMP, major anticipated issues, and any consistency concerns or requirements on the part of these local governments. Since that time, coordination with Hidalgo County has occurred at every step in the process through direct mailing and recently through a series of meetings involving Commissioner Joe Burgess. The consultation and coordination process for the RMP is summarized in Chapter 5.

53



Mr. Tim Salt
Bureau Of Land Management, Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Mr. Salt,

In March of 1990 I began a 3,100- mile hike from Antelope Wells to the Canadian border. I am happy to report that in October of 1990 I reached my objective.

I am writing today to comment on the Draft Resource Management Plan for the Mimbres Resource Area. I feel I can make some judgment based on my experience walking through and seeing first hand much of the land in question.

I would first like to say that of the options available I would choose Alternative B. The land in question still maintains some wonderful wild qualities. However cattle grazing is putting strong pressure on this arid land. Many areas north of Hacita, especially riparian zones, seemed to be in marginal shape and this of course was in March. I am not writing you with the intent to remove grazing I am however making in the strongest possible terms the idea that strong controls and monitoring must be enforced on this fragile public land.

53-1 I am somewhat confused by the lack of application of the criteria in the CDNST Comprehensive Plan as to the identification and selection of a trail location. You appear to give several lines on maps calling it trail but their is no discussion of the given merits of each proposed route or how it relates to the management plan of the given area. Finally, the Continental Divide Trail Society has stated that it's preferred route would be what the BLM has identified as a Spur Route running south to Columbus, many questions remain and I feel should be aired more fully in the final plan.

The trail itself has been mandated by Congress. I feel it is an important step to make it's boundaries a reality. In this remote country a rancher or a hired hand could potentially misunderstand the motives of a person hiking through their allotment and a serious conflict could arise.

I am happy to see the wildlife goals stated in the plan, but remain concerned by the level to which the Animal Damage Control is used to affect predator species in your unit.

Thank you for taking the time to read over this comment, it simply is no easy task to please so many differing views. I look forward to reading the final report.

Sincerely,

Stephen Capra

Stephen Capra
399 Dolores Street
San Francisco, Ca 94110

53-1 Please refer to Comment 13-1.

54

November 22, 1991

Bureau of Land Management
Las Cruces District Office
1800 Marquess St.
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Sirs;

I am writing in response to the 1991 Draft Copy of the Mimbres Resource Area Environmental Impact Study done by your office. Of special interest to me have been the recommendations your office makes concerning the Central Peloncillo area where I live. After careful study and consideration, I have concluded that there are no satisfactory recommendations, presented by your office, to choose from. Options B,C & D would eliminate livestock production from this area, as well as, any improvements to the land, causing economic and ecological devastation to the area and its permittees. Option A would force area permittees to allow access to any person who so desired access. This would create havoc and possible devastation to the area's animal population, wildlife and natural resources and existing structures. It would also eliminate any further improvements to the area, thus causing a future hardship on animal life.

54-1 I also noted that no economic study had been developed or included in your study. I am wondering how you can present a study, like this one, without taking into consideration the economic impact your recommendations will have on our local community's economy. My wife is a member of the Animas Board of Education and is very concerned with the ramifications your proposals might have on the local school budget. We are both concerned with economic impact on our county government if livestock production were prohibited in this area, as your proposals B,C & D recommend.

Again, I would like to state that I find all your recommendations A,B,C & D unsatisfactory, I find the report biased in favor of special interest groups and not well thought-out as to the impact your recommendations will have on your current lessee's or the area's total economic well-being. I also find the study in conflict with our nation's founding father's philosophy of a government, of the people, by the people and for the people. In conclusion, I would like to state that I am opposed to further government regulations that have no regard for the well-being of the people they impact.

Sincerely,

Murray Keeler

Murray & Judy Keeler
P.O. Box 307
Animas, NM 88020
(505)548-2520

54-1 See response to Comment 51-2. We do not feel that the Proposed Plan would have a significant economic impact on Hidalgo County. Only Alternative B (in the Draft RMP/EIS) could cause a significant impact to the local economy.

55

11/18/91

This is a continuation of the comments presented by me in a paper dated 10/22/91 After further study of the draft RMP/EIS I respectfully submit the following.

LIVESTOCK GRAZING:

RE: Table S-2 pg. S-8

55-1 I find the estimates of AU loss due to land disposal to be misleading Cattle numbers turned in on BLM grazing permits might decrease but the land would continue to be grazed either by the owner or by private lease resulting in equal or greater livestock numbers.

RE LIVESTOCK GRAZING pg. 4-107

55-2 It is stated under this heading that livestock grazing would be eliminated on 8,026 acres within ACEC's but that AUs would remain the same. Experience leads me to believe that grazing would be reduced by at least 133 AUs

RE LIVESTOCK GRAZING pg 4-108 & 110

55-3 The statements that Black Gramma " is believed" to be less drought and grazing tolerant and that the plant "appears" to be less drought and grazing tolerant are speculation and these statements should not be included in a document of a permanent nature such as this one without scientific data to prove their validity

RE LAND ACQUISITION- SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

55-4 Alternative D proposes the acquisition of 149,320 acres of land Luna County Ordinance No. 17 Exhibit A states that" Any net loss of private land should be opposed." The Ordinance also states that land exchanges between land agencies will be allowed only after the study and approval of the county commission (Policies to be implemented #7)

The Draft RMP/EIS conflicts innumerable times with the aforementioned Luna County Ordinance No. 17 and should be revised to fit within the limits of this ordinance.

Leedrue Hyatt

Leedrue Hyatt

55-1 Animal units (AUs) lost due to land disposal actions are published in the Federal Register. A notification is sent to the grazing permittee giving him/her 2 years to continue to use the AUMs attached to the lands being lost. If the permittee can acquire a lease on those lands, the permit remains status quo. If not, the AUMs are subtracted from the permit. If the land was not fenced out of the allotment, it would continue to be grazed but with fewer livestock.

55-2 AUs would remain the same because livestock have already been excluded from all but the proposed Bear Creek ACEC. The 8,026 acres include the Red Rock Game Farm - 1,100 acres; Central Peloncillo Mountains ACEC - 4,446 acres; proposed Bear Creek ACEC - 1,480 acres; and the Organ Mountains - 1,000 acres.

55-3 See response to Comment 20-5.

55-4 Under the Proposed Plan, BLM would dispose of 156,460 acres while acquiring 149,320. This results in a net loss of 9,140 acres of public (not private) land. Also, see the response to Comment 20-3.

56A

November 21, 1991

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Mr. Salt,

The following are comments on the draft RMP for the Mimbres Resource Area.

In general I believe that alternative B is the acceptable alternative, doing the most to preserve BLM lands. Preservation rather than conservation should be the priority in the Resource Area. In selecting Alternative D, it appears that you have ignored comments made during the scoping process.

Vegetation

56A-1 I approve of your proposal in Alternative B that "increases in forage would be reserved for wildlife and watershed". However you also state that in fragile land areas, efforts would be directed toward improving range conditions. This appears to contradict the prior statement, in that range would be improved for domestic livestock.

Grazing should be eliminated on all Category I or C allotments.

Riparian

56A-2 All designated riparian habitats should be protected under and ACEC and grazing eliminated from these areas. Box Canyon should be designated as a riparian/arroyo habitat.

Wildlife

Regardless of which alternative is selected, Ibex should be removed from the Florida Mountains as there is no justification for that exotic species remaining. ADC for the protection of domestic livestock should be eliminated.

ACEC

56A-3 Florida Mountains considerations. ACEC values are not just scenic. They also include cultural and biological resources. No comprehensive survey has been done on cultural resources but there are known prehistoric sites.

The Floridas also contain the State endangered Night Blooming Cereus and the Escobaria orcuttii var. Koenigii which is

56A-1 The terms "range" or "rangeland" are not synonymous with domestic livestock or grazing. Rangeland includes soil, water, and vegetation. Improvement of range condition is synonymous with improvement of vegetation and watershed conditions.

56A-2 Box Canyon is proposed for ACEC designation under Alternative B. While Box Canyon does not fit the Bureau's definition of a riparian area, it is considered arroyo habitat. Most recognized riparian areas are included in proposed ACECs. Others would be managed in accordance with the continuing management guidance section of the RMP.

56A-3 See response to Comment 29-12. The Proposed ACEC does not contain significant or highly vulnerable cultural resources compared to the other areas, where this is a management goal.

56A

biologically threatened in New Mexico.

Minerals

All proposed ACEC's should be closed to mining.

Cultural

56A-4 In any alternative, the primary management concern should be protection. Only after the resources are adequately protected, should objectives such as research and interpretation be considered. Based on some of the prehistoric sites I have seen, BLM has not done a good job of protecting these resources. One objective should also be to acquire prehistoric sites on private lands which are adjoining BLM land and which may be threatened.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Storm M. Sermay

Ms. Storm M. Sermay
3382 Solarridge St.
Las Cruces, NM 88001

56A-4 The BLM's primary goal in the Cultural Resource Management program is the protection of cultural values. A secondary goal of the program is public education and interpretation where appropriate. In some cases, interpretive sites are offered greater protection due to additional presence at these sites. In many cases, archaeological sites have been damaged by vandals and "pothunters." The BLM attempts to protect these sites through the law enforcement program and through volunteer on-site patrols.

Archaeological sites located on non-BLM administered lands within, and in some cases adjacent to, ACECs or other Special Management Areas would be given priority for acquisition.

November [illegible], 1991

US Dept of Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess St.
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Subject: Comments on RMP for Mimbres Resource Area

You have, obviously, a scribe who can transcribe the comments of those who are concerned enough to spend time commenting (an almost always futile task) without themselves actually having a pecuniary interest in the management of the people's land. Beyond that transcription, I ask again that someone read those comments who can listen and even comprehend them!

Being reduced to a tick on a bureaucrat's list of "pro's, con's, and others," let me now register my tiny tick under the "Supports Alternative B, Having Preservationist" column.

56B-1 The specific criticism I have, which there is no chance might be heard, follows. The standard utilization rate for black grama called for in the RMP is 40%. The utilization rate called for in the twice appealed Afton allotment plan is 30%. Someone, somewhere, thought that 30% was an appropriate usage rate. More than that, this rate was vigorously defended by the BLM in the Cosimati appeal hearing before Judge Rampton. Look again and reconsider the usage rate.

56B-2 My other specific criticism, as implied at the beginning, is that the BLM has been UNRESPONSIVE to the public's input.

I put it to you, that if this plan were to be submitted to scrutiny by any disinterested scientist or academic (read this as having no indoctrination at an Agricultural College) with a background in the science of ecology, or "whole natural systems," then it would be condemned, using FLPMA's own criteria. No matter. No matter. It's not BLM's fault. It's somebody else's responsibility. Right?

I append, for the record, my comments on the RMP Scoping, and make them a part of these comments.

Respectfully,
Perry Plummer
Perry Plummer
3382 Solarridge St.
Las Cruces, NM 88001

56B-1 The utilization rate called for in the Afton grazing decision is 35 percent. The judge stated that "the District Manager's decision to limit utilization of black grama to 35 percent is not only proper but mandated" in this case. He went on to state that "whether or not the Bureau was applying the same utilization rate for black grama in other allotments was irrelevant." Proposed use for black grama depends on the condition of the range. The Proposed Plan has been revised to include utilization criteria for all key forage species, not just black grama. For additional information on black grama and other key forage species refer to Appendix C-3, Grazing Management Considerations for the Mimbres Resource Area.

56B-2 Sometimes it may appear that BLM is unresponsive to public input; however, every comment is considered. Comments that conflict with existing laws, regulations, and policies cannot be adopted. BLM's basic mandate is found in Section 102 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. It is the policy of the United States that public land be managed on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield, in a manner that protects environmental values and recognizes the need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber. Ignoring provisions for economic development in the land use plan is as unlawful as ignoring environmental considerations.

July 29, 1989

US Dept of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess St.
Las Cruces, N.M.
88005

Subject: Comments of RMP Scoping

Your invitation to comment states that the Bureau will not address items for which valid decisions have already been made unless new information is apparent. I take this to mean that it is pointless to reason with professional government employees who have already made up their mind. I admit there is a certain practical wisdom in that, but in the tradition of Don Quixote...

I posit that the trained professional guardians of the public good are thinking using old, moderately old, and very old information, information which they learned in college numbers of years ago, information with a world view or outlook which is from ten to fifty years out of sync with the facts and philosophy of today. (Similarly, if you want the best medical doctor, you go to one who is freshly out of med school, not a seventy year old one. One can readily see this syndrome in our top political leaders who are acting on economic and political knowledge and opinions they learned in the 1930s and 1940s.)

I am asking that the Bureau take off its blinders and allow that some new information has indeed become apparent since it last took its bearings. I am confident in the benevolent aspect of the Bureau, that you strive to do what you think is good - as all people do - and that you seek excellence. (Do not mistake my sincerity.)

I have been told that the Bureau has no perks or promotions for additional college education. This is a mistake, as it is probably the only way that the staff can become current with today's knowledge without being threatened. In-house training has its place, but does not wander much from the inbred, self-interested path of thirty or fifty years ago, i.e. if the old hands disagree with the training, they will quite naturally have the training redirected along more agreeable paths.

Down to business.

GRAZING

You won't give me credence on this subject, so I most anxiously

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direct you to that bastion of radical environmental thought: The U.S. Congress, and its watchdog agency, The U.S. General Accounting Office. Specifically, I wish to include in this comment by reference three reports which pertain to BLM management of grazing: House Report 99-593, "Federal Grazing Program: All is not well on the Range," the GAO/RCED-88-105 Report of Congressional Requesters, "Public Rangelands, Some Riparian Areas Restored but Widespread Improvement Will Be Slow," and most recently the GAO report released on April 11, 1989,titled "Change in Approach Needed to Improve the Bureau of Land Management's Oversight of Public Lands."

O.K., let's admit that the Mimbres District is a small corner of the nation and very limited in what it is allowed to do regarding grazing. Nevertheless, I urge you to do what you can to restore the ecological resource of a land in the best condition presently attainable using the tools of which you are in possession. Don't give this nonsense that you cannot do anything "cost effective" to improve a lot of this land, nor do I want to ever hear again that the BLM considers a pitifully short 20 years as a "long range plan." At the very least, "long range" is a lifespan, and it should be hundreds, thousands, or millennia long if that is what it takes to undo the damage of the last 100 years. I have heard that much of this land, even with the cattle removed, still looks the same after twenty years. Agreed, but I counter that I have seen land in exclosures which has dramatically improved after 30 years. In either instance, 20 or 30 years is a drop in the bucket! Optimistically, without a conscious manipulation, I would hope that 100 years might begin the natural recovery process.

"Trying to do anything with 'C' allotments is not productive in a cost-benefit analysis," i.e. the return on investment would not justify the expenditure. (Gosh! I wish that quote had been around for me to use when my parents told me to clean up the mess I'd made. This same thought is apparent in the almost 3 trillion dollar federal deficit, which we decide yearly that it is better for us to let the grandchildren pay.) My answer to this is that these cost-benefit analyses are myopic. They regard only the gross profit and do not take into account the deferred maintenance. The bill for this deferred maintenance is coming due sooner than the public wants or realizes. While you and I will have to pay only nominal costs before we die, the children and grandchildren will pay dearly, even if a maximum effort were to be mounted now. It is our responsibility to defray that bill, to slow the exponential compounding of the "interest," to buy time for the adjustments the grandchildren will have thrust upon them.

The following are my suggestions:

All allotments should be put in the "Improve" category.

All the cattle should be removed from the "C" allotments to slow the compounding.

The BLM should initiate something like an "affirmative action" program for the public land, a program which errs on the side of preservation and restoration rather than the reverse.

The BLM should initiate an educational program in ecology (not range science) and start listening to its economically disinterested critics. An analogous program for permittees should be required for continued use of our lands.

As one of the "refinements" of grazing policy, all cattle should be removed from the land for two of three months during the growing/seeding season.

The BLM should initiate a policy to insulate their decisions from the undue pressure of national, state, and local politicos. Perhaps full and specific disclosure to the public of any conversations or correspondence with them would help. I know I would like to see this.

As long as my requests are modest, I suggest that a similar program to the one above be started to insulate staff from undue pressure by managers in favor of commercial interests (This is in response to GAO criticisms of precisely this pressure.)

Oh, did I mention that grazing fees should be raised to fair market value? I know. Its up to Congress. But could we change the name to something like a welfare fee, or public assistance fee, or discount fee? Maybe this last one is at least possible.

The Mimbres RA should, as should the state office, publish an annual "business" report stating the budget and the condition of its assets (the lands, allotments, riparian areas, wildlife, etc.)

ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL

Most importantly here, the BLM should have an environmental protection manager whose work it is to dig us out of this hole, to "pass" on BLM actions, and to "name the devil." The general benevolence of any single manager is not enough.

More enforcement personnel must be hired.

A plant biologist must be added to the local office. I realize~~d~~ there is one at the State Office, but too little attention is given to vegetation.

LANDFILLS

Deed restrictions can and should be placed on all federal lands

which pass to the public. Don't say it can't be done. You may not choose to do so, but it can be done. (Call them "Federally Reserved Garbage Rights.") If need be, the restriction can be forgiven or rescinded later, where appropriate. Any common developer, selling a single lot in a subdivision, has sense enough to insert deed restrictions to protect the remainder of his investment. You should be no less careful in protecting the remainder of the public's assets.

LAND OWNERSHIP ADJUSTMENTS

Lands surrounding "areas of special concern" (Wilderness, WSAs, NCAs, ACECs, RNAs, etc.) should be retained or acquired.

The approximately 2/3 section of state land contiguous with Box Canyon should be acquired. (Sect.2, T23S, R1W)

A "special effort" should be made to acquire the Anderson, Hopkins, and remaining Cox properties near the Organs, i.e. paying more than the value determined by BLM appraisers, which is allowed under special circumstances, with special approval, when it is determined to be for the public good

The north-south wildlife corridor between the Organs and the Franklins should be widened considerably, and the lands to accomplish this should be retained or acquired.

Lands to facilitate access to landlocked large blocks of BLM lands should be acquired.

Private lands just east of San Augustine pass should be acquired, specifically Sections 5 & 6, T22S, R4E, and most especially the Spaceport Subdivision which has almost unlimited potential as a mobile home subdivision (this is land just west of the Aguirre Springs road and presently has two homes on it.)

AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN AND OTHER SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS

All the ACECs presently under consideration ought to be immediately designated as such, without waiting until 1992!

Yes, the Gila River between Redrock and Virden ought to be designated as Wild.

Yes, the land in the Peloncillo Mountains between the Coronado National Forest and Antelope Pass should be included in the Wilderness Preservation System.

Regarding whether the lands in the Organ Mountains are suitable for Wilderness designation, my answer is "yes," and I support the N.M. BLM-Wilderness Coalition's recommendations for the same.

Regarding special management concerns along the U.S./Mexico border, this is one of the biggest false issues that has come along the pike in years. I remind the BLM that 99.9% of any problems result from cities, highways, and vehicles. Prohibiting vehicular access to most areas along the border will stop most smuggling and most illegal alien traffic. This is a little impractical in cities and on highways, but entirely practical where the public lands are involved. An advantage to closing the border areas to all traffic is that any vehicle found in those areas would automatically be subject to arrest, search, and seizure. They would be breaking the law merely by being on the BLM lands in a vehicle, and tracking and finding these lawbreakers would be like rolling off a log!

VEHICLE MANAGEMENT

All vehicular travel should be limited to "designated roads only." The Chihuahuan desert is too fragile to risk anything else. There may be signage problems. There may be enforcement problems. Irrelevant! A decision to begin implementing such an action is what a "RMP" is all about. "Limiting " use may be a beginning while surveys and road closures are underway.

ACCESS

My principle gripe here is that ranching permittees threaten the public with violence if the citizen doesn't get off the "permittee's ranch." I know of a number of these instances, and that's too much. I know that they should have been reported, but they weren't, and I was not personally involved. If I had been, I would have had the rancher arrested for assault, or shot him. Nevertheless, any permittee who interferes with the public access should receive severe administrative sanction, and not just a slap on the wrist. This also applies to locked gates interfering with public access.

Where small pieces of private land block a public road, cooperation should be guaranteed by the permittee, or cooperation on the BLM's part should be withheld (range improvements, cost sharing, road maintenance, etc.) Where practical, the road should be rerouted around the private land.

RIGHTS-OF-WAY

Oil, gas, and electric lines ought to be restricted to existing and used rights-of-way, unless there is overwhelming and obvious reason to do otherwise. The second biggest load of hogwash I've heard lately is that the electric industry needs new corridors because if a transmission tower topples, it could take out the other transmission lines. It's hard for me to imagine one of

---

those huge towers toppling, but if they are subject to failure, they should improve them, not trash more land.

MINERALS

The 1872 Mining Act ought to be repealed and all the damage that has been done at the public expense ought to be assessed against the existing operators and some measures taken to recover these damages. Until this happens, the BLM ought to tighten up its act.

All lands in WSA status should be withdrawn, most especially the Floridas, Cooke's Range, the Robledos/Las Uvas complex, and the Organs.

The BLM should require bonds for operations that disturb more than five acres. According to the GAO report of April, you rarely do, and the public bill for your failure reaches $284 million in the 11 western states. This kind of outrageous granting of favors and largess to stimulate industry belongs to Congress, not you, and when you do it, your are just rotten managers, no more, no less. Shape up.

RECREATION

I encourage you to continue to try to establish meaningful communication with the military. It is obvious that there is a great deal of unthinking jumping to conclusions going on at Fort Bliss. I hope that they will eventually realize that their future lies in cooperating with the public, not just protecting the~~m~~. public .

The BLM should diversify its recreation areas and its thinking. Right now, its attention is focused on the Organs and cannot be shaken. I repeat the suggestion that other areas be developed for RV overnight camping, e.g., in the Dona Anas, the Las Uvas, the Robledos, etc. Use your imagination.

CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

This is where some of those additional enforcement officers are needed to stop the proud traders in illegal artifacts. Stiffer penalties, more enforcement, and a bounty program (like "Crimestoppers") are all needed, budget permitting.

Most cheaply, vehicular access needs to be restricted to buy time for these areas. If they can't drive to these areas, most of these crooks won't go - they'll go burgl~~arize~~e a house instead.

WILDLIFE HABITAT

56B

Priority ought to be given to restoring all BLM land to a near climax condition. Of course, this is an impossible job - that's why it's at the top of the priority list!

Threatened and Endangered Species recovery programs should be pursued with a vengeance. This includes the Mexican wolf.

There is a some doubt whether the buffalo were native in post-contact times or not. If they were native in the last five hundred years, they should be reintroduced.

The bottom line is that the ecology of the area should be stabilized by a restoration of all native species, and an eradication of all exotic ones (plant and animal.)

SOIL, AIR, AND WATER

These should be improved, and not allowed to "moderately deteriorate." Do what you can. Be creative.

The BLM should plan on securing instream flows, when legally possible. If there is no existing law allowing this, I hope there soon will be, and therefore instream flows should be planned for. Areas to concentrate on are the Gila River, Blue Creek, and areas bordering the Rio Grande.

A good way to stop erosion is to stop scouring the land by over-grazing.

Protection of underground water resources against pollution from illegal toxic dumping and from legal landfills should receive attention.

VEGETATION

Protect plants. Restore species. Carry out vigorous T & E programs. Plants are the foundation for an ecosystem favorable to human life. When they are eliminated, reduced, displaced, the structure above comes tumbling. (And here come the camels!)

As mentioned earlier, all ACECs presently under study should be immediately designated.

All existing ACECs should be expanded.

Fire should be the preferred land treatment.

Sale areas should only be designated on lands chosen for disposal. Some deed restrictions ought to be initiated that require the plants be made available for public harvest prior to any substantial land-leveling for development by new owners.

56B

An aggressive program to reseed damaged lands should be initiated despite a cost/benefit analysis.

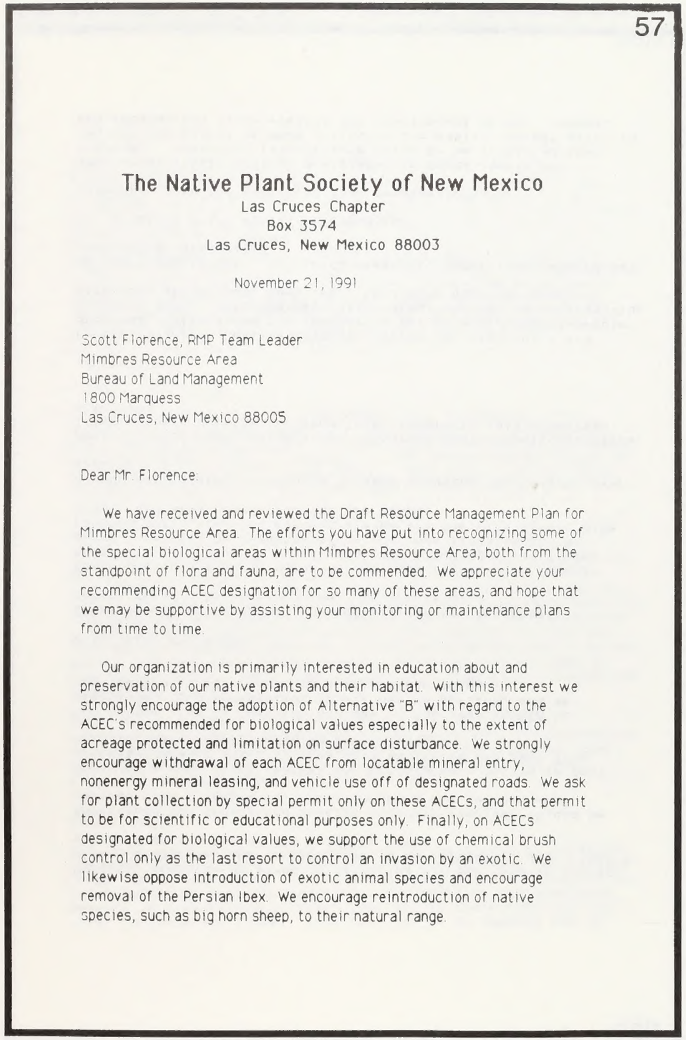
CLOSING THOUGHTS

It disturbs me that this Scoping Report is biased in favor of development. The question it asks over and over is "how can we develop, exploit, and commercialize this resource." Yes, there are some indications of attempts at conservation, but taken as a whole, it does not point the way toward conservation or preservation, much less toward restoration.

I ask you to re-examine your priorities in light of the Congressional reports.

Perry Plummer

Perry Plummer
3382 Solarridge St.
Las Cruces, N.M.
88001



57

The Native Plant Society of New Mexico
Las Cruces Chapter
Box 3574
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003

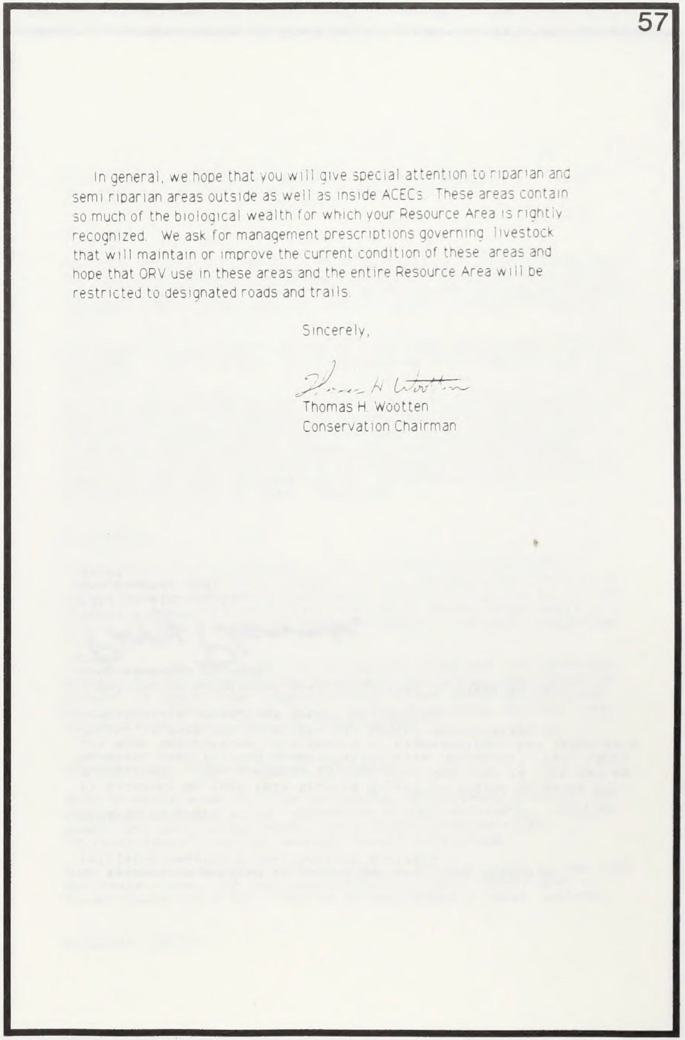
November 21, 1991

Scott Florence, RMP Team Leader
Mimbres Resource Area
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Dear Mr. Florence:

We have received and reviewed the Draft Resource Management Plan for Mimbres Resource Area. The efforts you have put into recognizing some of the special biological areas within Mimbres Resource Area, both from the standpoint of flora and fauna, are to be commended. We appreciate your recommending ACEC designation for so many of these areas, and hope that we may be supportive by assisting your monitoring or maintenance plans from time to time.

Our organization is primarily interested in education about and preservation of our native plants and their habitat. With this interest we strongly encourage the adoption of Alternative "B" with regard to the ACEC's recommended for biological values especially to the extent of acreage protected and limitation on surface disturbance. We strongly encourage withdrawal of each ACEC from locatable mineral entry, nonenergy mineral leasing, and vehicle use off of designated roads. We ask for plant collection by special permit only on these ACECs, and that permit to be for scientific or educational purposes only. Finally, on ACECs designated for biological values, we support the use of chemical brush control only as the last resort to control an invasion by an exotic. We likewise oppose introduction of exotic animal species and encourage removal of the Persian Ibex. We encourage reintroduction of native species, such as big horn sheep, to their natural range.



57

In general, we hope that you will give special attention to riparian and semi riparian areas outside as well as inside ACECs. These areas contain so much of the biological wealth for which your Resource Area is rightly recognized. We ask for management prescriptions governing livestock that will maintain or improve the current condition of these areas and hope that ORV use in these areas and the entire Resource Area will be restricted to designated roads and trails.

Sincerely,

Thomas H. Wootten
Thomas H. Wootten
Conservation Chairman

58

RMP Team Leader
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, N.M. 88005
November 21, 1991

Gentlemen:

The Bootheel Sportsman's Association appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft Resource Management Plan for the Mimbres Resource District.

Our main concerns, in looking at the plan are wildlife and habitat, access, and recreation. Other concerns include mineral entry and cattle grazing. We all know that mining and livestock play an important role in the economy of Southwest New Mexico.

58-1 Our Association has agreed "Alternative D" addresses habitat well. However, concerning wildlife, we would have to question the target numbers on big horn sheep vs. deer. The sheep numbers are somewhat high. The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish spends large sums of money on their sheep program. The sheep seem to just "hold their own". We would like to see your numbers increase in favor of the deer. We would like to see upland game also targeted in the plan.

The access portion of "Alternative D" should receive positive public support. However, we would like you to consider the 24 areas as outlined in "Alternative C" rather than the 19 areas in "Alternative D". If access is increased than recreational opportunities will also improve. "Alternative D" is acceptable to the Bootheel Sportsman's Association. We would like to see some adjustments made as I have mentioned earlier.

Thank you.

Jimmy Knight

Jimmy Knight, President
Bootheel Sportsmans Assoc.
P.O. Box 47
Playas, N.M. 88009

gmd

58-1 See response to Comment 31-1.

59

November 22, 1991

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Sir:

I deem BLM's present involvement in land use in Hidalgo County sufficient governmental involvement and would oppose any further broadening of federal government management of lands in Hidalgo County.

I also oppose any Areas of Critical Environmental Concern designation in Hidalgo County because of their restrictive nature.

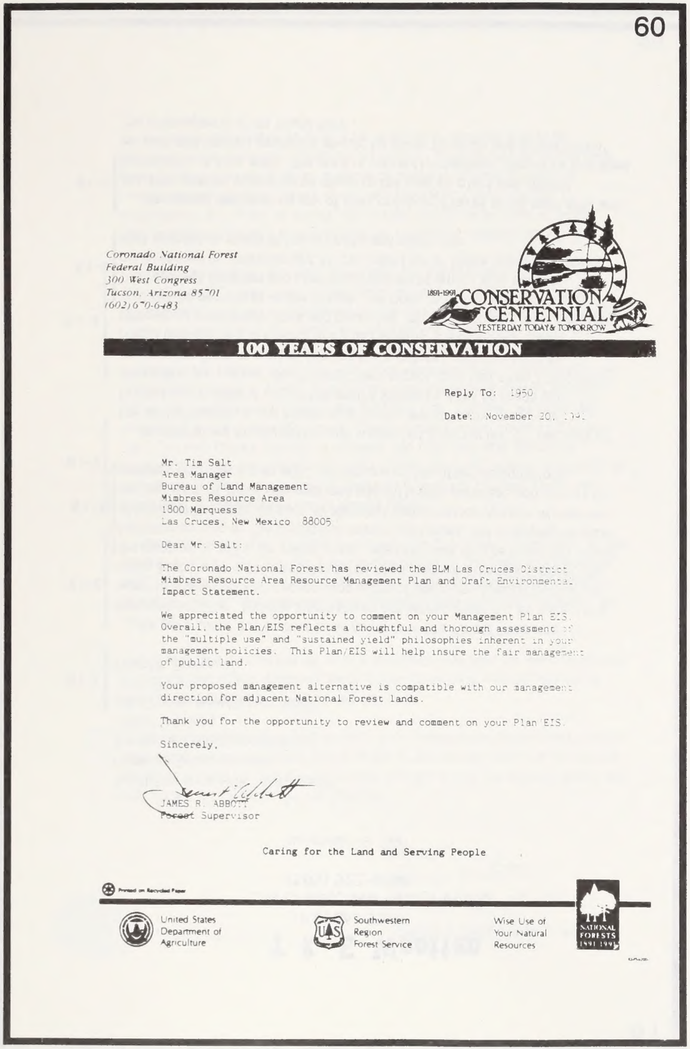
59 1 The BLM has not coordinated with the local county government to see if its Land Use Plan is compatible with the Hidalgo County Land Use Plan, which is required by law.

Therefore, I favor Alternative A (continuing present management) on all the issues.

Sincerely,

W. Lance Williams
P. O. Box 551
Lordsburg, NM 88045

59-1 See response to Comment 52-1.



60

Coronado National Forest
Federal Building
300 West Congress
Tucson, Arizona 85701
(602) 670-6483

1891-1991 CONSERVATION CENTENNIAL
YESTERDAY TODAY & TOMORROW

100 YEARS OF CONSERVATION

Reply To: 1950

Date: November 20, 1991

Mr. Tim Salt
Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

The Coronado National Forest has reviewed the BLM Las Cruces District Mimbres Resource Area Resource Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

We appreciated the opportunity to comment on your Management Plan EIS. Overall, the Plan/EIS reflects a thoughtful and thorough assessment of the "multiple use" and "sustained yield" philosophies inherent in your management policies. This Plan/EIS will help insure the fair management of public land.

Your proposed management alternative is compatible with our management direction for adjacent National Forest lands.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on your Plan/EIS.

Sincerely,

JAMES R. ABBOTT
Forest Supervisor

Caring for the Land and Serving People

Printed on Recycled Paper

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Southwestern
Region
Forest Service

Wise Use of
Your Natural
Resources

NATIONAL FORESTS 1891 1991

61

T & E Wootten
P.O. Box 3574
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003
(505) 522-8068

November 19, 1991

Scott Florence-RMP Team Leader
Mimbres Resource Area
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Dear Mr Florence

We have spent quite some time going over the "Draft Resource
Management Plan" and the alternatives presented therein. We especially
want to thank you for recognizing some of the many special biological
areas found within Mimbres Resource Area, and we strongly support the
designation of ACEC for these areas. We feel that this designation should
continue as long as the biological reason continues, not changing because
61-1 of a future designation such as National Conservation Area or Wilderness
We feel each of these designations has different purposes and we see no
conflict with having an ACEC within one of the other designations.

In general we much prefer your suggested Alternative "B", because of
the better resource protection it affords. We strongly encourage
limitation of vehicle use in the entire Resource Area to roads you
designate, we oppose use of herbicides except as a last resort to control
an invasion from an exotic, feeling more natural controls such as
prescribed burning are much more desireable. Likewise we support
removal of the Persial Ibex and hope that introduction of exotic species
will not be permitted in the future. We hope that you will add provisions
that address riparian and semi-riparian areas which will support
61-2 maintenance or improvement of the condition of these important areas
that support so much of the wildlife and plant life.

We oppose designating any of the Lordsburg Playas as an open area and
61-3 ask that special attention be given to the overall plant and animal
community in this area. The area is currently roadless, should be managed
as such and special emphasis should be given to study and protection of
the cryptogamic crust found here.

61-1 See response to Comment 29-3.

61-2 The Continuing Management Guidance section of the RMP addresses riparian and arroyo habitat management for areas that may not be included in an ACEC or Special Management Area, regardless of alternative.

61-3 The southern Lordsburg Playa is not roadless, and does not support the Griffith's saltbush found on the central Lordsburg Playa. The area proposed as an open area in the southern Lordsburg Playa has traditionally been used by off-road vehicles and windsailers for competitive events. Although it is fairly close to the proposed Lordsburg Playa RNA, there are significant differences in resource values between the two areas. Furthermore, it is imperative that we designate some open areas if we are limiting vehicle use over the majority of the Resource Area to accommodate the vehicle recreation community. Vehicle limitations without providing specific off-road opportunities will leave vehicle recreationists with nowhere to go, which may result in increased vehicle trespass and enforcement problems. Finally, the area proposed as an open area is devoid of vegetation. It does support migrating waterfowl when there is water in the playa, at which time it is completely unusable for vehicle recreation because of the gummy nature of the heavy clay soils.

The Lordsburg Playa does not qualify for wilderness designation. The area was inventoried in 1979 as part of the Alkali Flat Initial Inventory unit, which was dropped before the intensive inventory because of roads, major natural gas pipelines, livestock developments, and other major human intrusions throughout the area. It is not within the scope of this document to revisit existing wilderness recommendations and decisions.

61

All areas designated as ACECs for biological reasons should be protected from surface disturbing activities. They should be withdrawn from locatable mineral entry, nonenergy mineral leasing as well as mineral material sales, plant sales, and the other items you list in Alternative "B". Plant or animal collection should be by special permit only and these issued for educational or scientific reasons only.

61-4 In the Organ Mountain area, we prefer the maintenance of the six individual ACECs discussed in the Organ mountain CRMP, with boundary recommendations as recommended by The Nature Conservancy subsequent to the preparation of the CRMP. You are currently urging an increase in recreation. In the Organs and the six named areas should be managed in a much stricter manner than you will other wise agree to. Specifically, we urge no development, elimination of grazing, especially in Ice Canyon, Indian Hollow, Fillmore Canyon and Bishop's Cap. Further, we urge the

61-5 closure of the frontage ORV track from Soledad Canyon south to Bishop's Cap. The two tracks coming in to Webb Gap from the east should be stopped near the dirt water tank and further vehicular access should be by permit only. This whole area is constantly subject to plant theft and vandalism. Closing these trails should help.

61-6 We recommend that a buffer to include the E 1/2 Sec 19 and Sec. 30 and the SW 1/4 Sec. 31 T21S, R1 E be retained next to the Dona Ana Mountain ACEC and that the buffer recommended by Franklin Mountain Wilderness Coalition east of the proposed Organ/Franklin Mountain ACEC likewise be retained.

61-7 We feel that the following ACECs should be managed for semi primitive non motorized class: Antelope Pass, Cedar Mountains, Florida Mountains, Granite Gap, Guadalupe Canyon, and Las Uvas.

You are undertaking a vast project with these plans. Good monitoring of conditions in riparian areas and in those ACECs established for biological values is a must to insure your efforts are achieving the desired goals. We look forward to watching your progress.

Sincerely,

Thomas H. Wootten
Eleanor G. Wootten
Thomas H. and Eleanor G. Wootten

61-4 The Proposed Plan would designate the entire Organ-Franklin Mountains as one large ACEC. Management of the area would be in accordance with the Organ Mountains Coordinated Resource Management Plan, which is incorporated by reference in the management prescriptions. We have also incorporated specific management prescriptions to deal with the Ice Canyon Area. In addition, all biologically significant areas would receive more intensive monitoring. Also, see response to Comment 29-18.

61-5 The road from Barr Canyon to Peña Blanca provides vehicular access to recreationists using the southern Organ Mountains as well as to private land. Closure of this road would create access problems for private landowners, livestock operators, and the public, plus enforcement problems for the BLM. Closure of this route was proposed during preparation of the Organ Mountains Coordinated Resource Management Plan, and vehicle recreationists strongly opposed the closure. The route currently provides opportunities for driving, horseback riding, and mountain biking (including the annual Coyote Classic Mountain Bike Race) in addition to access for hiking, hunting, and other uses. The road to Webb Gap also provides access for recreationists. Increased enforcement would be our preferred method of dealing with problems of plant theft instead of penalizing the law-abiding public for the activities of the unscrupulous.

61-6 We feel the acreage identified in the Proposed Plan for the Doña Ana Mountain ACEC is sufficient. The public land surrounding the proposed ACEC has not been identified for disposal, but will be retained and managed by the BLM. Also, see the response to Comment 46-1.

61-7 Under the Proposed Plan, most of the Antelope Pass RNA and a portion of the Florida Mountains ACEC would be closed to vehicle use. Vehicle use in the remainder of the areas you mention would be limited to designated roads and trails. Management of these areas will accommodate the needs of recreationists such as hunters, who are the dominant recreation users of public land in these areas. Proposed vehicle designations will allow us to limit vehicle use to designated roads, protecting both the natural values of the areas and the access routes that allow the public to use those areas. Recreation Opportunity Spectrum management objectives will be for semi-primitive motorized recreation on those vehicle routes, semi-primitive nonmotorized recreation along the routes, and primitive recreation away from the vehicle routes.

SOUTHWESTERN PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY
P. O. BOX 1261 • AMARILLO, TEXAS 79170 • 806/378-2121

November 25, 1991

Attention: RMP Team Leader

Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

COMMENTS OF SOUTHWESTERN PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY

Subject: Electric Utility Transmission Rights-of-Way
in Mimbres Resource Area
as proposed in August 1991 draft EIS and RMP

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

Southwestern Public Service Company (SPS), an electric utility, is a New Mexico corporation founded in Roswell, NM, in 1904. The Company provides competitively priced retail and wholesale electric service to approximately one million persons in parts of New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas, and additionally provides competitively priced wholesale electric power to other utilities in the United States, including utilities serving in the Mimbres Resource Area in southwestern New Mexico. For these reasons, SPS is interested in transmission line rights-of-way or corridors established or planned in the Mimbres Resource Area.

Additionally, Southwestern Public Service Company this past week submitted to the United States Department of Energy an application for a presidential permit to construct, operate and maintain electric transmission facilities on the international boundary between the United States and the Republic of Mexico. These proposed

facilities, and proposed associated transmission lines from existing SPS facilities to the international boundary, could be affected profoundly by decisions and management practices that will evolve from the final Resource Management Plan for the Mimbres Area, especially as the plan relates to rights-of-way for electric transmission facilities.

We at Southwestern appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Draft Resource Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement of August 1991 not only because it will lead to policies that will affect our operations, but also because we are confident the goals and objectives our comments will attempt to convey are consistent with the larger public interests the Mimbres plan and statement clearly hope to serve.

We share the philosophical commitment of the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Land Management to the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. Equally, we share and respect the Department's and the Bureau's priority commitment to protection and propagation of sensitive, threatened, and endangered species -- and their habitats -- and commit that the policies and practices of this Company will continue to support those efforts. Too, we recognize the extremely difficult task the Department and Bureau personnel set for themselves as they attempt to balance and satisfy as possible the many diverse and sometimes conflicting economic and societal interests public lands serve. We hope our comments today and all of our activities are helpful in that daunting task.

The draft Mimbres Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement is an interesting and thorough discussion of an intriguing Resource Area, and of alternative management goals and policies that in one form or another will guide management of that area for the next two decades. Listed options range from emphasizing environmental protection to emphasizing resource production. Determining which alternative or what combination of alternatives will best serve the public interests surely is a task as tantalizing as it is difficult. We at Southwestern understand that we are not truly familiar with

62

the management issues in the Resource Area. We will limit our comments to the listed and pertinent issue in which we have expertise as well as interest: the necessity for electric utility rights-of-way in the Resource Area.

It is our conviction that electric transmission facilities are compatible with resource management goals including protection of the natural environment and the other elements of the human environment. No matter which resource management alternative or combination of alternatives eventually is adopted for the Mimbres Resource Area, rights-of-way and rights-of-way combinations that meet present and future electric transmission requirements and other environmental goals -- compatibly -- can be designated.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in the Mimbres draft plan already has articulated clearly principles Southwestern Public Service Company shares relative to public land transmission line rights-of-way designation. In Chapter 2, under Continuing Management Guidance and Actions, BLM stipulates that when rights-of-way are granted (see page 2-15, 2-16):

(1) New rights-of-way (ROWs) should be issued so that new facilities are located near existing sites or in existing corridors whenever possible to promote joint use.

(2) Because most lands actions in the Resource Area are compatible, and overlapping ROWs are issued whenever possible, it is assumed that management will continue to authorize and grant ROWs (as well as leases, permits, and recreation and public purpose easements).

Southwestern endorses the decision by BLM that these principles "will continue to affect the Mimbres Resource Area regardless of which RMP alternative is selected (page 2-2)."

Additionally, we believe it is particularly pertinent that the Bureau shares this utility's belief that where transmission corridors exist they should be jointly used --

62

"whenever possible." Clearly, not every transmission pathway that will be needed has been designated; there is and will be need for new transmission pathways as new potential load growth centers emerge. For instance, the preferred route for the transmission lines SPS has made application to build from Chaves County, NM, to the U.S.-Mexican border adheres wherever possible to established transmission line rights-of-way and corridors. However, the requirements of the customers who will be served by the lines dictate the lines must enter Mexico on the west side of Ciudad Juarez. That means a portion of the final miles of the proposed line must be built in an area where there is no established utility transmission corridor. Clearly, in a situation such as this, on public or on private lands, negotiations for new rights-of-way are in order. We are pleased that BLM in the draft Mimbres document in principle allows for this necessary flexibility.

62-1 However, SPS is concerned that in at least the specific discussion of alternative management plan A, the draft indicates "no new ROW corridors would be established..." (page 2-37, under Rights-of-Way). This declaration is distinct from prohibition of "routine" new rights-of-way in avoidance or exclusion areas, as discussed under the other alternative plans. Southwestern urges BLM not to preclude new transmission routing under any alternative, and to articulate in the final statement a recognition that new rights-of-way for utilities will remain a possibility as needs for utility service change or emerge and are recognized.

The second recommendation we make, or reiterate, is intended to underscore and support the principle BLM already expresses throughout the draft statement: Whenever possible, utility transmission lines should adhere to established corridors. This principle is articulated under Alternative A (p 2-37), Alternative B (p 2-42), Alternative C (p 2-54), and Alternative D (p 2-65). We notice, too, that public comments in 1989 (see p 3-27) clearly expressed preference for using existing rights-of-way corridors. There probably is little or no dissent from this principle.

62-1 Under Alternative A, there are no exclusion or avoidance areas. Any right-of-way requests for actions outside the recognized utility corridors would be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, we are changing the statement on page 2-37 of the Draft to read "New right-of-way corridors would be assessed on a case-by-case basis. No exclusion or avoidance areas would be identified." See Modifications and Corrections (Page M-1).

Under the other alternatives, exclusion and avoidance areas would be identified to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important resources within the ACECs and other Special Management areas.

62-2 One thing that needs to be specifically articulated additionally, then, is a 100% designation and full disclosure of existing corridors. Of particular interest to SPS, for instance, Map 2-5, Existing Rights-of-Way (ROW) Corridors, Alternative A (the only map published in the draft of existing ROWs) does not show all of the right-of-way for an existing 345-kV line (belonging to El Paso Electric Company) that crosses the Rio Grande just south of Vado, NM. Because of the sensitivity of the Rio Grande area to further transmission line development, SPS has designated that existing corridor as part of the preferred route for the proposed line to Mexico. We are concerned that Map 2-5 does not show the existing line as it crosses the Rio Grande, nor that it occupies right-of-way in the wide, flat corridor between the Organ and Franklin mountains.

We know this particular right-of-way has been recognized by BLM (see Organ Mountains Coordinated Resource Management Plan and Decision Record, Appendix 1, page 19). That gives comfort to our plans relative to our preferred route. We know, additionally, that BLM in the Mimbres draft (see p 3-4) recognizes "defacto right-of-way corridors" as well as "seven officially designated corridors." Those facts give utility planners further comfort. Still, it seems especially important as the Mimbres plan is finalized that every existing utility transmission right-of-way corridor in this area of public land be designated and demarcated.

SPS prefers not to comment on the relative merits of the proposed Alternative Plans. However, we must express concern, at least, that in the increasingly populous area between Las Cruces and El Paso it is vital that the Mimbres management plan allow for and preserve transmission pathways for energy utilities. We respectfully request that as BLM devises a final plan a high priority be assigned to utility transmission requirements.

For instance, topography apparently restricts natural pathways for east-west utility transmission in the area east of the Rio Grande between Las Cruces and El Paso to only three "passes" (Anthony Gap, Webb Gap, and our preferred

62-2 The existing utility corridor map in the RMP (2-1) has been revised to include the 345 kv line that runs east and west near Vado. This corridor will be confined to a width of ¼ mile.

route, the corridor between the Franklin and Organ mountains). A management alternative that places those passes in an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (such as BLM's preferred Alternative D apparently would do), in our opinion would be overly restrictive unless it were to stipulate that new construction in the existing utility corridors would be exempt from the generic avoidance and exclusion restrictions otherwise implied. Southwestern understands that transmission facilities can be constructed in avoidance areas "when no feasible alternative route is available," or even in exclusion areas "when mandated by law." But clearly the preferable policy is one that from inception stipulates sufficient, and even economic, rights-of-way for necessary future transmission for areas such as this area.

In addition to the principles of routing transmission in existing corridors whenever possible, of clearly designating all existing corridors, and of allowing for future corridors as necessary, Southwestern endorses the BLM-articulated principles in the draft Mimbres plan that transmission corridor planning should:

(1) be coordinated to the fullest extent possible with Federal, State, and local government agencies, adjacent landowners, and other interested persons and groups;

(2) be analyzed site-specifically and on a case-by-case basis that preserves natural and cultural values;

(3) use avoidance or mitigation measures to minimize adverse effects on affected environments.

This Company has been commended in the past, by BLM and others, for environmentally conscientious planning and construction of facilities, including transmission facilities. We are determined to continue constructing and operating with sensitivity to the environment. Our paramount concern is to contribute positively to the overall human environment. We hope the comments we make today will serve that purpose, and be helpful to the Department of

Interior and the Bureau of Land Management in serving that purpose.

Certainly, we invite dialogue with the Bureau and with other concerned agencies, persons, or groups, that could further mutual purposes. Please contact the Company through:

Mr. Olon Plunk
Manager, Environmental Affairs
Southwestern Public Service Company
P.O. Box 1261
Amarillo, TX 79170

Respectfully,
Olon Plunk
Olon Plunk

62

SOUTHWESTERN PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY
P. O. BOX 1261 • AMARILLO, TEXAS 79170 • 806/378-2121

NOVEMBER 26, 1991

Attention: RMP Team Leader

Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear RMP Team Leader:

Yesterday, first by FAX and later by U.S. Postal Service, Southwestern Public Service submitted to you (and, by copy, to Tim Salt and Juan Padilla) comments on the Mimbres Resource Area draft EIS and RMP.

Today, I have noticed an error on page 4 of our comments. As submitted, the comments indicate SPS proposes to build a transmission line from Chaves County, NM, to the international boundary between the United States and the Republic of Mexico. In fact, the proposed line would begin in Eddy County, NM.

We request that you substitute in our comments for the record the enclosed, corrected page 4. Correction of the name of the county is the only change on the corrected page.

Additionally, I would appreciate you making available to Mr. Salt and Mr. Padilla the corrected pages for their copies of our comments.

Sincerely,

Bill Crenshaw

Bill Crenshaw
Environmental Analyst

62

"whenever possible." Clearly, not every transmission pathway that will be needed has been designated; there is and will be need for new transmission pathways as new potential load growth centers emerge. For instance, the preferred route for the transmission lines SPS has made application to build from Eddy County, NM, to the U.S.-Mexican border adheres wherever possible to established transmission line rights-of-way and corridors. However, the requirements of the customers who will be served by the lines dictate the lines must enter Mexico on the west side of Ciudad Juarez. That means a portion of the final miles of the proposed line must be built in an area where there is no established utility transmission corridor. Clearly, in a situation such as this, on public or on private lands, negotiations for new rights-of-way are in order. We are pleased that BLM in the draft Mimbres document in principle allows for this necessary flexibility.

However, SPS is concerned that in at least the specific discussion of alternative management plan A, the draft indicates "no new ROW corridors would be established..." (page 2-37, under Rights-of-Way). This declaration is distinct from prohibition of "routine" new rights-of-way in avoidance or exclusion areas, as discussed under the other alternative plans. Southwestern urges BLM not to preclude new transmission routing under any alternative, and to articulate in the final statement a recognition that new rights-of-way for utilities will remain a possibility as needs for utility service change or emerge and are recognized.

The second recommendation we make, or reiterate, is intended to underscore and support the principle BLM already expresses throughout the draft statement: Whenever possible, utility transmission lines should adhere to established corridors. This principle is articulated under Alternative A (p 2-37), Alternative B (p 2-42), Alternative C (p 2-54), and Alternative D (p 2-65). We notice, too, that public comments in 1989 (see p 3-27) clearly expressed preference for using existing rights-of-way corridors. There probably is little or no dissent from this principle.

69

NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR/SECRETARY
Box 30005, Dept. 3189
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003-0005
Telephone (505) 646-3007

November 25, 1991

Mr. Scott Florence
RMP Team Leader
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Dear Mr. Florence:

This document serves to address the issues and information presented in the Mimbres Resource Area (MRA) Draft Resource Management Plan (DRMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). We have the following concerns:

1. Concurrent v. Consecutive Review of DEIS and DRMP Documents

Section 1502.14 of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations refer to the presentation of alternatives, including the proposed action, as "...the heart of the Environmental Impact Statement." Section 1502.14(b) of the NEPA regulations directs the concerned agency to "Devote substantial treatment to each alternative considered in detail including the proposed action so that reviewers may evaluate their comparative merits." Clearly, if the regulations reflect NEPA, Congress intended that environmental alternatives be presented fairly and equally in the draft EIS process. Although the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has presented alternatives in the draft EIS document, we believe that the BLM has not presented alternatives fairly and equally in the draft EIS process.

69-1 The draft EIS process, as currently conducted in New Mexico, involves the concurrent review of the DEIS and DRMP documents by the public. In our opinion, the inclusion of the DRMP in the draft EIS process effectively biases the reviewer's ability to evaluate the comparative merit of all alternatives by focusing unequally and unfairly upon a single alternative; i.e., the proposed action. Although the DRMP is not an environmental analysis document, the mere fact of its simultaneous presence, and the authority it implicitly imparts, serves to persuade the reviewer of the relative superiority of the proposed action and discourages the reviewer's impartial participation in the draft EIS process by fostering a belief, correct or not, that the proposed action is a *fait accompli*.

69-1 The BLM's planning process integrates the requirements of both the Federal Land Policy and Management Plan (FLPMA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The documentation for this integrated process is a single RMP/EIS (43 CFR 1601.0-6). The established BLM RMP process is described on Final Pages 1-1 and 1-3 (Draft pages 1-1 and 1-3). Public participation and interagency coordination occur throughout the process. The preferred alternative or proposed action is selected after the formulation of alternatives and estimation of effects, and before the Draft RMP/EIS is distributed for public review. The preferred alternative may then be revised based on public comments. The Proposed Plan is based on the revision of the Preferred Alternative, modified as the result of public comments.

69

Mr. Scott Florence
November 25, 1991
Page -2-

2. Amorphous Management Prescriptions for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Concerning ACECs, Chapter 1, Purpose and Need, Issue 2: Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Needed Decisions, asks the questions, "Which public land should be designated as biological, cultural, scenic, or natural hazard ACECs, and how should they be managed (the RMP must clearly identify management objectives for **each** area and what restrictions if any apply to **other uses**)?" [Emphasis added]. Subsequent Planning Criteria, Issue 2, contains many specific items to be considered by the BLM in developing answers to the questions asked under Needed Decisions. It is necessary to examine the descriptions for the proposed ACECs presented in Appendix H to: 1) determine whether the Planning Criteria and Needed Decisions have been adequately addressed, and 2) determine if the statement "ACECs...could result in a loss of AUs" (Table S-2, pp S-8, Livestock Grazing) is accurate.

69-2 A. Management prescriptions for The Cooke's Range ACEC under Alternative D (the preferred alternative) are vague. They call for development of a livestock grazing activity plan. What activities are to be included in this plan? Does an Allotment Management Plan(s) (AMP) currently exist? If so, what will be the permittees involvement, responsibility, and requirements? Has the livestock grazing activity plan been developed prior to the ACEC proposal in consultation, cooperation, and coordination with the permittee as required by Section 8 of the Public Rangelands Improvement Act? Will future livestock grazing activities require a more intensive level of management by the permittee? What will be the economic impacts upon the permittee, the local communities, and the county? Does this mean amending the existing AMP, or additional responsibilities for inclusion into the Annual Operating Plan (AOP) are subject to change on a yearly basis?

69-3 The management prescription calls for acquiring legal public access. What exactly does this entail? Does it involve condemnation of private property to acquire access through private holdings? Who will be affected by increased public access and will there be other ramifications such as increased vandalism to range improvements or private property?

69-4 How will limiting vehicle usage to designated roads and trails affect the ability of the permittee to effectively manage the range resource? Will provisions be made to allow access to fencelines, stock waterings, and other range improvements for the permittee?

69-5 The management prescription calls for fencing springs to protect riparian areas (1 mile of fence). How will this affect available water for livestock consumption, livestock distribution, and forage use

69-2 Most of the Cooke's Range ACEC falls within the Hyatt Home Ranch Allotment No. 03028. This range was intensively monitored for 5 years. The permittee was included in all phases of the monitoring. An Allotment Agreement stating revised objectives and outlining planned actions and the monitoring and evaluation for the allotment was signed with the permittee in 1991. An Allotment Management Plan (AMP) incorporating all the items in the Allotment Agreement and a grazing rotation system for the allotment will be completed as funding allows. The AMP will establish a system which is acceptable to the livestock operator that also meets the objectives developed in the Allotment Agreement and the management goals for the ACEC.

69-3 Acquisition of legal public access can be done by consolidating land ownership through exchanges, purchase or gifts of easements on existing vehicle routes across non-Federal land or construction of new access routes across public land. The preferred methods of acquisition are those that avoid conflicts with landowners. It is possible that improved access could lead to increased vandalism of livestock developments or other private property. However, an easement across private property does not give the public the right to use the private property, and the BLM will work to alleviate such problems by signing private land boundaries and patrolling problem areas.

69-4 Limiting vehicle use to designated roads and trails will not hinder the effective management of livestock. This designation does not mean that old roads will be closed if they serve a purpose or even that new ones may not be built if they are needed. It simply will restrict vehicles from driving across country and destroying vegetation, which would be in the best overall interests of the livestock producers. Access to maintain livestock developments may occasionally necessitate issuance of authorization to drive off roads in these areas, which would likely require some rehabilitation effort by the permittee.

69-5 The 1 mile of fence would not be a single linear mile of new fence. It would be the approximate amount of fence required to construct exclosures (1-10 acres in size) around springs on public land. If these springs are being used as livestock water, provisions would be made to provide water outside the exclosures. The exclosures would not be of a size which would disrupt livestock distribution, forage use patterns, or stocking rates. This section (and other similar sections for other ACECs) has been revised to require consultation and coordination with the permittee and to include other methods of protecting or rehabilitating riparian areas such as relocation of existing water troughs. The BLM would pay for the cost of implementing these projects.

Mr. Scott Florence
November 25, 1991
Page -3-

69-5 (Con't) patterns? Will other compensatory water sources be developed or made available? If yes, who will develop the water and who will pay the cost? If no, will stocking rates be decreased? By how much? What will be the economic impact to the permittee, the local communities, and the county? Will the permittee's level of management intensity need to increase as a result of this prescription? The same questions pertain to the Uvas Valley ACEC proposed management prescriptions (Alternative D).

B. Areas of Critical Environmental Concern are defined by the Federal Land Management Policy Act. The relevance, importance, and management prescriptions of proposed ACECs are land use planning decisions formulated, in this case, by the MRA DRMP/DEIS planning team. Included in the DRMP/DEIS are Needed Decisions and Planning Criteria to guide the ACEC proposal and management process. It is obvious the ACEC management prescriptions presented in the MRA DRMP/DEIS do not resolve the needed Decision Question posed in paragraph 3 of this document, nor does it respond to the Planning Criteria. The amorphous and non-specific nature of the proposed ACEC management prescriptions do not help the reviewer to evaluate the proposed ACECs.

69-6 The inclusion of non-specific ACEC management prescriptions in this document is further compounded by a statement found on page H-2 in Appendix H. "An attempt has been made to develop management prescriptions that are as detailed as possible to avoid the time and expense of preparing activity plans for each ACEC subsequent to the RMP. In some cases, the need has been identified to develop site-specific grazing plans or other activity plans for individual ACECs." [Emphasis added]

If the BLM has an aversion to spending additional time and money on ACEC activity plans other than that which is provided in the RMP, perhaps ACEC designation is not the proper land management in these areas. In such cases where the need has been identified to develop site-specific grazing plans or other activity plans for individual ACECs, have these plans been formulated and finalized prior to ACEC proposal and designation in the spirit of consultation, cooperation, and coordination with involved parties?

C. When the BLM begins the process to amend or develop a resource management plan, the agency is required to consider the ability of the resource area to respond to local needs when formulating reasonable alternatives. The regulations state:

69-6 Site-specific planning and environmental analysis of ACEC project proposals will be conducted later when specific project locations are known and before any projects are implemented. The later activity planning, project planning, and associated environmental assessment will focus on proposals that are site-specific, based on this more general, broader RMP/EIS. This concept is known as tiering and is provided for under the CEQ regulations for implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1508.28).

For site-specific grazing plans or other activity plans proposed in the RMP/EIS, consultation, cooperation, and coordination with involved parties will be an integral part of plan development.

Mr. Scott Florence
November 25, 1991
Page -4-

Factors to be considered include, but are not limited to:

(e) Specific **requirements** and constraints to achieve consistency with policies, plans and programs of other Federal agencies, State and local government agencies and Indian tribes;

(g) Degree of **local dependence** on resources from public lands; [Emphasis added] [43 CFR 1610.4-4(e),(g)]

Clearly, the BLM **must** consider the impact of its actions on the economic stability and community stability aspects of the **counties** involved. Further, after alternatives have been developed, the **BLM** "...**shall** estimate and display the physical, biological, **economic, and social effects** of implement each alternative considered in detail." [Emphasis added] [43 CFR 1610.4-6]

69-7 Contradictions occur in Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences, Alternative D, Social and Economic Conditions. The last paragraph of the summary (pp 4-129) reads, "There would be **no significant economic effects unique to Alternative D from ACEC designation**, vehicle management, access acquisition, right of way, paleontological resources, wildlife habitat policy, minerals policy, cultural and management, or **vegetation management**." [Emphasis added]

On pp 4-132, same alternative, the last paragraph addressing Cummulative Impacts states, "The designation and management of ACECs, coupled with the acquisition and management of the Gray Ranch by The Nature Conservancy (TNC), would cause a combined economic **impact** on commodity-based land uses and activities within portions of the Resource Area." There is no indication or explanation of the **type of impact** or **the cause and effect** of the impact. [Emphasis added]

If there is no significant economic effect unique to **Alternative D** from **ACEC designations as summarized**, why should the acquisition and **management of the Gray Ranch** by The Nature **Conservancy, as it relatesto** ACEC **designation** and management, cause any additional economic impacton land uses.

In summary, the **generalized** nature of the ACEC **management prescriptions** provides the BLM with an almost boundless latitude to impose **administrative management** decisions. Furthermore, the **BLM fails to address the economic impacts of proposed ACECs or the effect of management prescriptions of** specific ACECs **concerning individual** resource users, **communities**, or counties. Until our **concerns are**

69-7 The cumulative impact of ACEC designations and the Gray Ranch acquisition would not have a significant effect on the regional economy. Economic impacts are addressed in Chapter 4, pages 4-47 to 4-50.

Site-specific environmental analyses will be completed before any ACEC projects are implemented.

addressed, we do not believe the DRMP/DEIS is inadequate and does not meet the requirements of NEPA.

69-8

D. The Nature Conservancy New Mexico Field Office prepared an inventory report for the BLM under the BLM's FY 89 Challenge Cost-Share Program. The report titled "Potential Biological Special Management Areas in the Mimbres Resources Area" identified and evaluated potential biological ACECs using the relevance and importance criteria outlined on page H-1 of the MRA DRMP/DEIS. As the challenge cost-share program is an agreement and not a contract, it is not subject to the competitive bid process. Nevertheless, did the BLM explore, solicit, or approach other organizations or entities to provide, or comment on, the ACEC information?

The TNC report is an inventory per say, but the information would have recommendation qualities inherent to the content. The entirety of the report is the basis on which ACEC proposal, acceptance, and management prescriptions are formulated, eventually resulting in a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. The report was not subject to public review or comment after its completion or prior to its use in designing ACEC proposals for the DRMP/DEIS. Only after the completion of the draft plan was the report made available as part of the entire data base used to formulate the overall DRMP/DEIS. Would it not better serve the principles of multiple-use management to allow public review and comment on a report that directly results and influences major agency actions prior to its use as a guiding document? Perhaps there are issues and concerns in the report that deserve additional input and involvement from other parties; i.e., the resource users that may be affected by proposed ACEC designations. The objectivity of the report as prepared by the TNC should also be subject to question and comment by other interested publics prior to its acceptance and use by the BLM for ACEC recommendations.

3. Inconsistency in Forage Utilization Levels

The summary of Anticipated Impacts (Table S-2, pp S-8), Alternative D, Livestock Grazing, as presented in the DRMP/DEIS states "...40 percent use on black gramma could result in a loss of AUs." Reference to this use level is found in Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences, Alternative D, Livestock Grazing (pp 4-108) and reads, "Proper use levels on black gramma of 40 percent could cause some long-term reduction in livestock AUs (approximately 10 percent). Black gramma, a preferred species, is believed to be less drought and grazing tolerant than other native species." Page 4-110, same chapter and alternative, under Vegetation, states "The long-term survival of

69-8 Many inventory reports contain recommendations. According to Section 201 of FLPMA, inventories or identification of ACECs does not, of itself, change or prevent change of the management or use of public land. It is only when this information is used as the basis for decision-making through the planning process, that it does so. See General Response No. 2 on ACECs on page 5-11.

Mr. Scott Florence
November 25, 1991
Page -6-

black gramma could be jeopardized as the plant appears to be less drought and grazing tolerant than other forage species. [Emphasis added]

69-9 If research data are available which support and defend these conclusions, the BLM should include or make reference to such in the DRMP/DEIS document. Are the BLM utilization levels of black gramma based on belief and appearance of that species ability to resist drought and tolerate grazing? Resource management decisions, especially ones concerning long-term planning documents, need to be predicated on science not perceptions or conjecture. Assumptions and unsubstantiated expectations should not be used to manage the rangelands resource.

Sincerely,

Frank A. DuBois

Frank A. DuBois
Director/Secretary

FAD:bas

69-9 See response to Comment 20-5.

70

2537 E. Edgewood
Mesa, Arizona 85204
November 25, 1991

Mr. Tim Salt
Area Manager BLM
1800 Marquess St.
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

I appreciated the opportunity to meet you last Thursday and to learn more of the Mimbres Resource Management Plan. I am concerned about the choices offered in the options and particularly those options that would result in an economic loss to the permittees whether by cuts in carrying capacity or additional regulation.

70-1 I would like to protest the procedure that includes and solicits more direct input from an entity like the Nature Conservancy than from the permittees whose very livelihood is dependent on "conserving and enhancing" the productivity of the land. In my opinion, it is wrong for procedures to give more involvement to such a group over permittees who have invested much more in conserving the resources than the Nature Conservancy ever will.

70-2 Before adopting a plan generated as it was, we need proof that
the proposed management will achieve the goals. For example,
prescribing reducing grazing to improve the resource is accepted by
many to be an accepted fact that it will improve the range.
However I do not agree that it is necessarily true. In fact, I can
show places where there has been little grazing for several years
and the health and vigor of plants is decreasing rapidly while
areas with heavy use but managed recovery comparable plants are
thriving and increasing in vigor. In addition, the issue of
compensation to permittees that are damaged by the proposals needs
to be resolved. Permittees are entitled to a proportionate amount of
70-3 input (using actual dollars invested in improving the resource as
the comparison base) as the Nature Conservancy was granted. This
needs to be input during the development phase and not just input
in public hearings.

Sincerely,

E. James Lunt

70-1 See response to Comment 69-8.

70-2 All plans are developed based upon principles of sustained yield and multiple use. The final plan will be the collective result of the best professional judgment of the planning team and public comment. Continual monitoring and evaluation will be necessary to determine whether or not the plan is accomplishing management goals and objectives.

70-3 We do not believe that the Proposed Plan would cause damage or loss to permittees. This is based on the results of the assessment of impacts (see Chapter 4). All permittees have been provided the opportunity for input throughout the development of the plan, beginning with the identification of issues and planning criteria in 1989. At that time, a Scoping Report was issued which provided the pubic an opportunity to commend on issues and planning criteria which would establish the framework for the planning process. Public meeting were held in July 1989 to discuss the Scoping Report and a follow-up report was issued in November 1989. The public was informed by letter of subsequent milestones in the process and opportunities for input leading up to the release of Draft RMP/EIS.

71

Bar V Five Ranch
H.C.R. Box 692
Duncan, Arizona 85534
November 15, 1991

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Re: Environmental Impact Statement
Mimbres Resource Area

Dear Mr. Salt:

We, the permittees of the Crookson Allotment located in Grant County New Mexico, which is part of the Mimbres Resource Area Resource Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement, would like to comment on different issues of the environmental impact statement.

At this time, we would like to request that Bar V Five Ranch be put on your mailing list for the Mimbres Resource Area Wilderness Planning Study and the Apache Box ACEC.

71-1 One of the main issues we would like to comment on is the maps we are reffered to during the draft. Better maps are needed to even be able to locate the areas which are being discussed or referred to. Bar V Five Ranch would like to have copies of a good map showing the areas effecting our allotment.

Under Appendix H-1 Areas of critical environmental Concern (ACECs) Apache Box ACEC Alternative D: To change the VRM Class from VRM Class I to VRM Class II. That Item 10 in Alternative C be added to Alternative D.

71-2 In Appendix I-4 Wilderness Inventory Report Apache Box, Table I-4 Human Imprints in the Gray Peak inventory area. Should this be the Apache Box inventory area?

71-3 There seem to be conflict between the WSA Report and the ACEC Report and needs to be reviewed and revised so they are in conjunction with each other.

71-1 See response to Comment 29-2.

71-2 There is a misprint in the title of Table I-4. Table I-4 should be titled Human Imprints in the Apache Box Inventory Unit. This has been corrected in the Final.

71-3 There is no conflict between the Apache Box ACEC and WSA reports. The proposed ACEC is considerably smaller than the WSA and so the resource bases of each area are not identical.

71

71-4 In Chapter 2 Alternative D, Item 3, Vehicle Management: We would like to bring to your attention that the road going to Bear Tank is a maintained road by the permittee to check fences, clean Tanks and distribute Salt. The Permittee uses this road a miminum of twice a month.

71-5 In reference to Appendix I-4 the stumps which are referred to were cut back in the 1930's for fuel for the Clear Lake Operation not fence posts.

71-6 In reference to the importance of reestablishing trees on the hills and ridges where they have been cut for fence and firewood; the quality grasses and junipers would be in competition with each other and without the grasses to hold the soil in place, erosion would occur. The management of the alligator juniper to be thinned out is needed to let the grasses survive.

Thank you for taking our comments into consideration.

Bar V Five Ranch
BitterCreek New Mexico

71-4 The vehicle trail does not show any evidence of mechanical construction or maintenance, but is simply a two-track maintained by the passage of vehicles.

71-5 Thank you for apprising us of historic wood use in the area. At the time of the inventory in March 1990, there was considerable evidence of recent woodcutting in the area, particularly along the southeast side both north and south of Red Kelly Tank, as well as other locations near and northeast of Crookson Peak.

71-6 In the area where juniper has been chained in the past, the resulting stand of juniper is far more dense than other juniper stands in the area. Juniper is a naturally occurring plant on upland sites such as the hills and ridges in the Apache Box WSA. Wildfires naturally thin out or eradicate juniper stands, which are then replaced by grasses. Eventually, juniper will return and the cycle will start over. Prescribed fire would possibly be the method of maintaining grassland that would be most compatible with WSA or wilderness management. Any proposed vegetation manipulation would be analyzed for alternatives and conformance with the Interim Management Policy or Wilderness Management Policy. If the Apache Box WSA is released from wilderness consideration, other forms of vegetation manipulation would be more acceptable.

72

November 24 1991

Scott Florence
BLM-Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, N.M. 88005

Dear Mr. Florence,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Mimbres CRMP. I appreciate the effort that has been expended on the CRMP.

In general I am favorably impressed by the document. I approve of the increased emphasis on environmental protection.

As a procedural issue I object to the designation of a prefered alternative before public input is received.

I strongly prefer alternative "B".

72-1 The subject of my greatest concern with the CRMP, and the regional BLM in general, is it's inadequate grasp of the dynamics of the areas population growth. The population growth is treated as static, or at most, linear. In fact it is exponential, and the exponential factor is going to change upward. If the effects of the CRMP are projected for twenty years, an arbitrary but reasonable assumption, the areas population at the end will be ten times the present. In another twenty the regional population may approach the present size of Southern California's.

In particular I am concerned about the disposal of lands in the Las Cruces area. I realize that there is a currently a vacuum in the area of urban planning in Doña Anna County but the BLM's disposal schedule is the apotheosis of good planning. The CRMP says that increasing land supply will save farmland from development. In fact farmland in the area is going to be developed inevitably, in the absence of strong incentives from local planning agencies. The amount of farmland in the region in fact is not determined by the amount of suitable land but rather available water. The planned disposals will contribute to "urban sprawl", one of the areas greatest problems. An adequate infrastructure is difficult to develop under these conditions. Property tax levies will not be increased as the CRMP states.

72-2 In addition the proposed disposal is wasteful of Federal land exchange "capital". Land values will increase exponentially in the vicinity while the value of areas to be acquired in the "hinterlands" will be increasing much more slowly. In effect we can get more "bang for the buck" if disposal is deferred. As an example, look at the value of the former Indian School land in Phoenix.

I approve of the CRMP's increased designation of ACECs, especially plan B. I would like to see increased protection of ACECs by a more uniform standard, more like the Wilderness System Act's. The types of protection I would like to see included are reduction of grazing, no use of herbicides, vehicular exclusion, mineral sales or leasing, and plant sales. I think ACEC status should be retained even if an area is changed to Wilderness. 72-3

I oppose range improvements for grazing. The BLM is completly unrealistic about their efficacy and economic benefits. Several important items are left out of the BLM's grazing decisions. For example,

72-1 Page S-1 of the Summary states that "a major driving force behind the preparation of the RMP is the burgeoning population of the Las Cruces/El Paso areas and the resultant increased demands on the public land within the Mimbres Resource Area."

72-2 The BLM would use land designated for disposal to acquire State trust and private lands in areas that have high resource values or unique characteristics. If disposal is deferred, the opportunity to acquire these unique lands might be missed.

72-3 See response to Comment 29-3.

72

what are the costs of flood and soil erosion control due to grazing?

72-4 I think a concentrated effort should be made to consolidate land management in the Cooke's Peak area and stated in the CRMP.

72-5 I oppose the proposed recreation sites in the Doña Annas. I think this is a bass ackwards move. The area is overly impacted now and use will increase greatly with urban growth. Campsites will increase the impacts on the area. The small number of campsites will preclude adequate management. I think the area is very suitable for ACEC designation for several reasons and campsites are incompatible with all of them. An area like this out in the boonies would be a great place to put primitive campsites, but this is just too close to town. Emphasis should be placed on preservation in areas in proximity to town and on providing more diverse recreation possibilities in dispersed areas.

I think the Persian Ibex should be eliminated from the Floridas, and all of New Mexico.

Livestock should be permanently excluded from the Gila riparian area.

The Cedar Mtns. and especially the Las Uvas should be retained as ACECs.

72-6 The Organ Mountains Scenic ACEC should be expanded. Achenbach and Indian Hollow should be designated ACECs. I think that individual ACECs should be considered for the Organs and retained in spite of NCA or Wilderness designation. I protest any plans to increase recreation in the Organs. I support inreased buffer areas around the Franklins and Organs.

I support Peña Blanca as wilderness area.

I support Gray Mountain as wilderness.

Thank you very much.

Yours truly,

Jim Graham

Jim Graham
1108 Gardner
Las Cruces, N.M. 88001

72-4 Under the Proposed Plan, Cooke's Peak would be designated as an ACEC. Efforts would be made to acquire the State trust and private inholdings within the ACEC boundaries. See Appendix H.

72-5 Recreation facilities will not be developed in the Doña Anas without establishing a host program like the one that has been so successful in deterring problems at Aguirre Spring. The development of camp sites in the Dona Ana Mountains is partly in response to the concerns of the environmental community who do not wish to see any further development of the Organ Mountains for overnight camping. Monitoring and patrol of campsites or other recreational facilities in remote areas is also much more difficult and costly to accomplish.

72-6 See responses to Comments 29-3 and 61-4.

73

phelps dodge Mining Company Hurley, New Mexico 88043 • (505) 537-6136

D. P. Milovich
Vice President-New Mexico Operations

MRA STAFF ASS

November 22, 1991

Mr. Tim Salt
Mimbres Resource Area Manager
Las Cruces District Office
Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Department of the Interior
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

RE: Written Comments On The BLM August 1991 Draft Document Entitled Mimbres Resource Area Resource Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement

Enclosed are our comments, with supporting exhibits, on the subject document for which the comment deadline is November 25, 1991.

Your consideration of our comments will be appreciated. Please direct any questions you may have to Mr. Thomas R. Shelley at (505) 537-3381, extension 111.

Very truly yours,

D.P. Milovich

DPM:dfr

Enclosures

xc w/o Exhibits: S. A. Crozier
M. R. Koranda
H. M. Conger
D. J. Gurtler
P. C. Novotny
T. R. Shelley
J. Kolessar
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DIVISION OF PHELPS DODGE CORPORATION

73

WRITTEN COMMENTS BY

PHELPS DODGE CORPORATION
210 CORTEZ STREET
P. O. BOX 7
HURLEY, NM 88043

TO

MR. TIM SALT
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA MANAGER
LAS CRUCES DISTRICT OFFICE

THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
1800 MARQUESS STREET
LAS CRUCES, NM

NOVEMBER 23, 1991

REGARDING

THE BLM AUGUST 1991 DRAFT DOCUMENT

ENTITLED MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

73

Phelps Dodge wishes to thank Mr. Salt and the staff of the Las Cruces District Office for this opportunity to comment on their Mimbres Resource Area Draft Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

We support the general goal of this planning, which is to provide the best management possible of BLM lands.

Phelps Dodge Corporation and its corporate affiliates have extensive holdings in ACEC's (Areas of Critical Environmental Concern) and WSA's (Wilderness Study Areas) under consideration in the proposed plan. In addition, grazing leases and unpatented mining claims are held on other public land in the counties of Grant, Hidalgo and Luna. The corporate affiliates affected include Chino Mines Company, a partnership managed by Phelps Dodge Corporation at Hurley, New Mexico, and Pacific Western Land Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of Phelps Dodge Corporation at Tyrone, New Mexico.

We are concerned that under all of the proposed alternatives in the draft plan, large acreages are withdrawn from mineral entry and many of the proposed alternatives will inhibit mineral development and the use or development of water resources. Additionally, the various alternatives to a greater or lesser degree may impact the management of adjoining patented land.

The plan, as you know, is an extremely complex document with various changes proposed in the use of a very large total area of public land (approximately 3,053,820 acres of federal land surface and 4,125,780 acres of federally reserved mineral rights).

To determine the affect of these changes on our interest, we are looking at each area where a change in management is proposed and determining if and how we now use (or may wish to use) this area and areas adjacent to it.

Because of the time required to do this, and to know the true impact of the proposed changes on our resource utilization and extraction activities, and for other reasons described below, we requested, but were denied, an additional 90 days, or until February 25, 1992, to submit written comments on the draft plan.

Our representatives met with you and some of your staff November 1, 1991 in Las Cruces to discuss the oral comments given earlier in Lordsburg and to review some of the expected impacts of the plan on Phelps Dodge operations. Because of the complexity of the plan, we are unable to predict with certainty all of the impacts that may occur. However, the following concerns are now recognized and your consideration of them will be appreciated prior to your selecting and implementing a preferred alternative.

73

-2-

We strongly favor Alternative A, The No-Change Alternative. However, we realize that changes may be necessary to improve environmental protection and also to give higher priority to resource development. We then favor Alternative C, with recommended changes which give higher priority to resource production and economic development when compared to Alternatives B and D.

Our general comments, as well as those specific to the Alternative C issues and management concerns, are as follows:

1. We concur with the 1977 U. S. Department of the Interior "Final Report of The Task Force on The Availability of Federally Owned Mineral Lands" (U. S. Government Printing Office Stock No. 024-000-00834-7) that we are continuing to experience withdrawals of massive tracts of public lands for exclusive uses and that these withdrawals have:

   --"Been made without knowledge of the cumulative effects of such decisions on a regional, state or nationwide basis;

   --"Excluded mineral access to areas in excess of needs and have needlessly excluded mineral development;

   --"Administratively extended or broadened the scope of formal withdrawals;

   --"Been made with insufficient resource information and without benefit of any economic tradeoff analysis."

2. Withdrawal of public lands from mineral entry is of concern as an unnecessary and potentially harmful action. Two concerns need to be addressed by the BLM land use planners:

   (1) The southwest region of New Mexico has a significant mineral development potential, and is largely unexplored by modern techniques.

   (2) Exploration and mining can coexist with other resource values, and any negative impacts can be mitigated via existing regulations and reclamation techniques.

   2.1 Mineral Development Potential

73-1 In the Draft Plan, geologic inference is not allowed as proof that any particular withdrawal area has mineral development potential. To be consistent with this, a cursory examination should not be sufficient to prove that there is no mineral development potential. We request that the Draft Plan state that the BLM will not consider mineral withdrawals in those areas that have indicated mineral potential based on existing geologic evidence until better information is available.

73-1 Under the Proposed Plan, other resource values would outweigh the value of any known mineral occurrences, based on our present knowledge. If future information becomes available in areas closed to mining that would warrant a change in the land use decisions, this could be considered in a plan amendment.

73

Mineralized lineaments crisscross the southwest portion of the state. These broad belts of mineral cccurrences include the "New Mexico Mineral Belt" and "Texas Lineament", and are well documented occurrences. In Mineral and Water Occurrences of New Mexico it is stated "...The southwestern corner of New Mexico ..clearly is the most likely area to contain other major deposits."

Geologic occurrence of mineral deposits follow natural laws, and are just one of the resource values on the lands. The mineral deposits are the oldest resource on the lands and cannot be relocated to avoid conflicts with other values.

Geologic mapping of the state has been performed for only about half of the state, and includes only surface mapping. The majority of the Mimbres Resource Area is not geologically mapped, or is mapped at a scale smaller than 1:63,360. This indicates the need for additional information. Full geologic mapping as well as non-surface disturbing exploration via geophysical, geochemical, gravimetric, magnetic, electric, seismic and thermic techniques would be required to make a better evaluation regarding the mineral potential of any given area.

Historic records of mineral development in the region abound, but only indicate the already discovered or surface exposures of mineralization. While this is valuable as a tool to indicate a broad blanket of mineralization, it does not define the full extent of mineralization which may be hidden beneath the surface.

See the attachments (from Mineral and Water Occurrences of New Mexico) U.S.G.S. Bulletin 87, New Mexico, Exhibit A excerpts regarding known oil and gas and mineral occurrences. This region has demonstrated occurrences and therefore future potential for gold, silver, lead, zinc, copper, iron, manganese, beryllium, molybdenum, uranium, selenium, vanadium, tellurium, thorium, rare earths, tungsten, fluorspar, niobium, tantalum, antimony, arsenic, bismuth, cadmium and even gem minerals.

2.2 Mineral Versus Other Resource Values

It is obvious that BLM feels that the ACEC's and other withdrawal areas have existing resource values that they wish to protect. It is equally obvious that these resource values are in-place despite the fact that these same areas have been open to mineral entry for over 100 years. This indicates that a lack of restrictions has not "ruined" these values.

Areas such as the Organ Mountains, Cooke's Range and the Florida Mountains have historically experienced periods of intense mineral development and yet still retain the other resource values. Many of the rugged geologic features which create the visual, riparian and biologic habitat areas for other resource values are the same geologic features that create mineral occurrences.

Modern mining activities are environmentally regulated by numerous federal, state and local requirements regarding exploration, development and abandonment of mineral properties.

Mineral exploration and development can coexist with other resource values. The mineral occurrences predate all other resource values, and cannot be relocated to areas less environmentally sensitive.

Many modern methods of baseline geologic exploration are not surface disturbing. In the event that mineral anomalies are discovered, further exploration or development could then proceed based on the premise of site reclamation and minimal environmental impact.

As previously documented in comments to the BLM on WSA's, none of the ACEC's are entirely pristine. All contain some roads, wells, fences, mining claims and other indications of prior use. If these areas are proven to have no mineral development potential, then none will occur. Closing the areas to mineral exploration is a de facto elimination of a resource value, and is not warranted by any evidence that past or future exploration has or will harm the other existing resource values. 73-2

3. Having attended your open house in Lordsburg, New Mexico on May 30, 1979, your workshop in Silver City, New Mexico on September 19, 1991, and other public meetings in between, we are disappointed to learn that mineral-energy values and activities have been given too little consideration in the proposed plan (we in fact expressed these concerns in written comments to the draft scoping report for management and resource issues for development of the plan). This comment applies generally to each of the areas recommended for special designation under the proposed plan. Specific examples include the following information, which should be included in the final plan preferred alternative:

73-3 3.1 Gold, silver, lead, zinc and copper deposits occur within the Carlisle-Steeple Rock District of your ACEC's and WSA's areas NM-030-27 and AZ-4-83. The U. S. Geological Survey Bulletin 1222-E, Table 1, reports $13,086,311 in ore and metals produced from the Steeple Rock Mining District between 1904 and 1959. Claims there remain active today.

73-2 While mineral development may not occur, exploration activities can have significant impacts on sensitive resource values. It is for these reasons that some areas would be closed to mineral entry.

73-3 See response to Hearing Comment LO3-1.

73

73-3 (Con't)

3.2 Silver, gold, copper, lead, fluorite, pumice and perlite deposits exist within the Lordsburg-Pyramid- Virginia Mining District of your ACEC's and areas NM-030-11, Pyramid and NM-030-012 UHL Draw and ACEC, (Reference U. S. Department of Interior Geological Survey Bulletin 885).

3.3 The Florida Mountain Mining District contains known deposits of lead, zinc, silver, copper, fluorite and manganese (Reference U. S. Geological Survey Bulletin 87). Although not considered for wilderness designation at one point in time, a move to reconsider NM-030-034, Florida Mountains and other study areas may be underway. Also, we suggest that the best opportunity to locate new deposits is in the vicinity of known deposits.

3.4 Known mineral deposits within the Cooke's Peak Mining District and the Jose Subdistrict include lead, zinc, copper, gold, silver and manganese. Your NM-030-031, Cooke's Range, Wilderness Intensive Study Area is immediately adjacent to these districts. Again we suggest that one place to find new deposits is in the vicinity of known deposits.

4. Many areas of special interest have not had the benefit of having mineral resource surveys completed by the U. S. Geological Survey. Those areas which have been studied and for which survey bulletins have been published, were not made available in a timely manner for comment by the general public. We learned on October 26, 1990, that comments were due October 29, 1990, For new WSA's in New Mexico. We disagree with some of the conclusions published which deny the likelihood of locating ore in the bulletins we have seen. It has taken more than a year to obtain any of the bulletins which were important to the evaluation of areas as WSA's, ACEC's, etc.

5. We oppose those aspects of the plan that circumvent mineral resource development under the existing mining and environmental laws. We object to the withdrawal of federal lands from mineral entry. As nearly as we can determine, there are about 1,415 historically recorded mineral entries in the vicinity of long standing WSA's. Only 102 of these remain active and 1,313 are marked "case closed." We are concerned that continued use of these mineral entries has been inhibited unnecessarily under WSA designation. The same areas designated ACEC's in the plan will adversely impact the use of minerals on these lands.

6. Whenever wildlife habitats, recreational uses, vehicular uses are authorized on federal lands, degradation of adjoining state and private lands may occur if planned uses are not compatible with private and state land uses. Such degradation may include vandalism of improvements, rutting during inclement weather, degrading vegetation due to cross-country vehicular travel. Control of access through adjoining lands to federal land is of vital concern to adjoining land owners. Drug traffic may find shielding when law enforcement agencies cannot move freely through remote or less frequently used areas. 73-4

7. ISSUES OF LAND OWNERSHIP ADJUSTMENTS (ALTERNATIVE C)

Phelps Dodge favors the identification of 292,710 acres of public land for disposal to consolidate BLM lands and to improve their management. Phelps Dodge does not favor changes in ability to exchange land or to dispose of tracts when a need is clear. Maximum flexibility must be available to enable changes to be made rapidly to improve environmental protection and the development of natural resources.

73-5 Phelps Dodge opposes any attempt of BLM to acquire the five state parks in the area. These parks are now managed well for public use at minimum cost and the protection of the environment. We do not believe that management problems will be solved by BLM acquiring them. Only a shift in the economic burden and management responsibility would result.

8. ACEC'S AND OTHER SMA'S

Phelps Dodge reviewed the Alternative C Proposal to designate 27 areas as ACEC's and has the following comments and recommendations:

We oppose the inclusion in this proposal those areas that are already designated WSA's. This would delete the following areas and acreages from the proposal:

AREA	ACREAGE
Aden Lava Flow	3,930
Alamo Hueco Mountains	4,670
Apache Box	2,630
Big Hatchet Mountains	4,390
Cooke's Range	4,440
Florida Mountains	5,670
Gila Lower Box	6,490
Guadalupe Canyon	4,170
Organ Mountains	8,840
Total	45,230

73-4 See response to Hearing Comment LO3-2.

73-5 See response to Hearing Comment LO3-3.

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73-6 Phelps Dodge and others submitted extensive comments since 1980 as to why these areas should not be designated wilderness. If unsuitable, for various reasons, for wilderness consideration, they are also not suitable for ACEC designation, which would prejudice the process of wilderness designation by creating wilderness-like conditions through management of these areas as ACEC's. We also hope that the BLM would not try to achieve de facto wilderness areas by description and management as ACEC's. This infringes on the role of Congress in deciding which areas should or should not be designated wilderness. It also gives these areas wilderness-like management under less stringent requirements than exist in the wilderness designation process. No area should be included in an ACEC that does not possess the defining qualities of an ACEC. Therefore, Phelps Dodge opposes the variations in sizes between Alternatives B, C and D.

9. Most areas designated for intensive study are pockmarked with state and private land inclusions which will make their administration as wilderness areas difficult and costly, if not impossible. Examples are study areas NM-030-035 (Big Hatchet Mountains), -042 (Cedar Mountains), -052 (West Potrillo Mountains), -036 (Sierra Rica Mountains), -011 (Pyramids), -006 (Granite Gap, South), -026 (Blue Creek) and -031 (Cooke's Range).

10. Many of the federal lands in the Mimbres Resource Area are not fenced and must be managed in concert with adjoining deeded and state lands. As is, this plan will adversely affect the flexibility in management of these other properties.

73-7 11. Many of the selected intensive study areas and ACEC's border immediately on busy highways or roads. Inadequate buffer zones exist for consideration for wilderness designation or for ACEC designation or for wild and scenic river designation. Examples are study areas NM-030-023 (Gila Box), -006 (Granite Gap, South), -009 (Beacon Hill), -035 (Big Hatchet Mountains), -025 (Redrock), -042 (Cedar Mountains) and -003 (Black Mountain).

73-8 12. Most of the areas, if not all, selected for intensive study lack natural vegetation suitable for ACEC's or wilderness designation. Many intensive study areas have desert-like, dull and uninteresting topography with little or no water, also not suitable for ACEC's or wilderness designation. Examples include: NM-030-052 (West Potrillo Mountains), -042 (Cedar Mountains), -023 (Gila Box), -011 (Pyramids), -009 (Beacon Hill) AND -035 (Big Hatchet Mountains).

For the areas, which are either existing ACEC's and SMA's or are newly proposed ACEC's, additional time is necessary to investigate the validity of the values claimed and for the possible impact of the proposed management changes on our existing and likely future resource utilization activities, both in and adjacent to these areas.

73-6 See response to Hearing Comment LO3-4. Regarding the difference in size of the ACECs by alternative, there are no proposed ACECs that do not meet the relevance and importance criteria for ACECs (see page H-1). The significant resource values are not uniform throughout an area, nor do they stop at a certain point. The variation in size between ACECs reflects these traits, with areas of higher concentration of significant resources included as core areas in all alternatives and larger areas with lower concentrations of significant resources included in other alternatives. The management prescriptions and boundaries also differ by alternative to reflect stronger orientation to protection or commodity production.

73-7 See response to Hearing Comment LO3-5.

73-8 See responses to Hearing Comments LO3-4, LO3-5, and LO3-6.

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-8-

73-9 13. Although we support the designation of sections of the Butterfield or the Continental Divide Trails for historic or scenic purposes, we recommend that the BLM begin with the designation of only relatively short sections of each. The land acquisition required, development of shorter segments and availability to the public will be much sooner than for the lengths proposed in Alternative C. Portions of these trails are either not scenic or possess potential water, energy, mineral of other resources. More time is required to investigate these potential resources and comment to the BLM. Also, a road along the Butterfield Trail from Fort Cummings past Pony Hills passes through this study area. Several dams are located along that portion of the road.

14. Phelps Dodge does not object to the study of the following four areas for wilderness potential:

Organ Needles	7,630 ACRES
Gray Peak	16,080 ACRES
Apache Box	6,300 ACRES
Pena Blanca	4,470 ACRES

This concurrence is conditioned on the provision of adequate time for public investigation of and comment on these areas. From descriptions given in the draft plan, these areas do not have wilderness potential. A thorough investigation should verify this.

73-10 We question whether the Organ Needles area is also a proposed ACEC. If so it should be removed from such consideration for the same reasons given above for proposed wilderness study areas.

15. WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

73-11 The Gila Lower Box (2,480 acres) and the Gila Middle Box (760 acres) are not suitable for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System for the following Reasons:

15.1 The Lower Box area contains many works of man and lacks wild and scenic qualities required for such designation.

15.2 Both areas experience very low and intermittent flows due to legal upstream withdrawals.

15.3 Future water development as well as presently authorized water diversions on the upper Gila River will be seriously impeded by designation of the stream as wild and scenic, wilderness, ACEC's, etc. Such competing uses will increase in intensity and the need for additional water will not decline or disappear.

73-9 See response to Hearing Comment LO3-7.

73-10 See response to Hearing Comment LO3-4.

73-11 See response to Hearing Comment LO3-9.

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15.4 The proposal to secure instream flows in the future in the Gila Lower and Middle Boxes ignores the farming, ranching, municipal and industrial interests in the Gila River and conflicts with authorized uses under laws of the State of New Mexico. Phelps Dodge and Pacific Western hold extensive water rights upstream upon which their operations depend.

16. VEHICLE MANAGEMENT

Phelps Dodge generally supports the Alternative C vehicle management proposal with the following two reservations:

73-12 16.1 The designation of roads and trails for vehicle use in special management areas should be open to public investigation and comment.

73-13 16.2 The need for closure of 54,900 acres along the Mexican border is not stated in the plan and access for mineral exploration should be allowed under written permit if access is restricted solely for control of drug traffic or illegal entry.

17. ACCESS

Phelps Dodge, in principle, does not oppose developing access to public lands. For this reason, we favor the Alternative C proposal, which only proposes the development of access, but not access restriction.

73-14 Our only reservation is that each of these access development plans should be available for public investigation and comment to ensure that resource utilization and development and environmental protection concerns are understood and addressed beforehand.

18. MANAGEMENT CONCERNS, ROWS

Phelps Dodge does not oppose the designation as row exclusion areas those areas finally designated as ACEC's. We also do not oppose the designation as row avoidance areas those sections of the Continental divide National Scenic Trail and the Butterfield Trail that are finally developed for public use.

73-15 In those areas open to standard row stipulations, Phelps Dodge urges the BLM to request public investigation and comment before taking action to ensure that development of water, energy or mineral resources in a proposed row is considered.

73-12 See response to Hearing Comment LO3-10.

73-13 See response to Hearing Comment LO3-11.

73-14 See response to Hearing Comment LO3-12.

73-15 See response to Hearing Comment LO3-13.

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19. MINERALS

Phelps Dodge favors the Alternative C recommendation wherein the entire resource area would remain open to locatable mineral entry.

73-16 It is not clear to us which areas are proposed to be closed to mining in addition to the ACEC's and the two trails. This should be clarified in the plan, and we should then have more time to determine the impact of this proposed closure.

As we commented before, more time is required to evaluate the proposed ACEC's (after removing the wilderness study areas from ACEC designation). If after this time an area is determined to possess ACEC qualities, the decision concerning any need to close this area to mining can be made. It may not be in the public interest to unnecessarily withdraw ACEC's or portions thereof from mineral entry.

73-17 We do not favor a blanket prohibition against disturbing riparian areas. We favor improved management of these areas, but stipulations could be unnecessarily applied prohibiting an operation if an access road passes through a riparian area. There should be some discretion available to the BLM at the local level to allow an operation where impact is minimal.

73-18 We would also like some clarification about what special mitigation will be required on slopes greater then 20 percent and then we would like to comment on this.

73-19 We recommend that the plan acknowledge that the inventory of resource values is an ongoing process and that no unnecessary constraints be applied to responsible mineral and energy exploration.

73-20 Phelps Dodge has submitted a sodium carbonate permit application, which is pending with BLM, located in Sections 13, 14, 23, 24, T23S, R20W (Township 23 South, Range 20 West, N.M.P.M.) for a mineral lease for Playas/Tyrone branches. Under several alternatives, it appears this area may be withdrawn from leasing. This is an example of why mineral districts need to remain open. The White Oaks mineral development is another example.

Oil and gas development is in progress in Pedragosa Basin. Management of Big Hatchet and Alamo Hueco WSA's should accommodate development of oil and gas. The Espia No. 1 Exploration Well NG at 19,000 ft. blew tools and casing out of the well proving the presence of at least some gas at that location.

73-21 The existing mining and environmental laws allow mineral exploration and development on public lands. We recommend that the plan not restrict the application of these laws.

73-16 See response to Hearing Comment LO3-14.

73-17 See response to Hearing Comment LO3-15.

73-18 See response to Hearing Comment LO3-16.

73-19 See response to Hearing Comment LO3-17.

73-20 See responses to Comments 7-1, 7-2, and Hearing Comment LO3-1.

73-21 See response to Hearing Comment LO3-18.

73

20. RECREATION

Phelps Dodge favors the development of recreation areas on BLM lands as proposed in Alternative C. We do not favor the acquisition of the state parks for the reasons given previously.

73-22 We are also concerned that the primitive campsites not be located where natural resource exploration and utilization activities can occur, nor in environmental protection areas.

21. CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

We presented comments above on the designation of ACEC's and the elimination of existing wilderness study areas as proposed ACEC's. If our recommendations, as well as the one on the trails are adopted, a thorough evaluation of proposed ACEC's for their cultural values will occur.
Areas eventually designated ACEC's, which have cultural and paleontological resources, and those areas of the trails finally designated should be managed as described in Alternative C.

22. WILDLIFE HABITATS

Phelps Dodge has no comment on the wildlife habitat proposals in Alternative C.

23. SOIL, AIR AND WATER

73-23 Phelps Dodge would like clarification of what the BLM means by the management of an area as Class II for air quality and then we would like time to comment on this.

24. VEGETATION

73-24 Phelps Dodge is concerned about the statement in Alternative C that there may be possible reduction or exclusion of surface disturbing activities on lands the agency has designated as fragile. This constitutes a large quantity of land that we do not agree is correctly designated as fragile.

We would prefer that the BLM view each site and proposed activity on a case-by-case basis with the emphasis on allowing the activity in a manner that will not harm or will improve the condition of fragile lands. We recommend maximum flexibility in management of these lands, not stringent regulatory requirements.

73-22 See response to Hearing Comment LO3-19.

73-23 See response to Hearing Comment LO3-20.

73-24 See response to Hearing Comment LO3-21.

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25. RIPARIAN AND ARROYO HABITAT

As described above, Phelps Dodge does not favor the designation of ACEC's those areas that are already wilderness study areas or other areas proposed until they have been thoroughly investigated as to value of existing or potential resource utilization.

Again, we do not favor the inclusion of the Gila River areas in the Wild and Scenic River System.

Finally, also as noted above, we do not favor the attempt to secure instream flows for these areas.

26. SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

73-25 Phelps Dodge favors the consideration of an area as an ACEC if, among the values considered, it contains special status species. We are concerned, however, that the species listed are indeed special status species and, if so, that they are present in the areas listed.

We request clarification from the BLM on these issues and time to comment in the context of determining the suitability of areas as ACEC's and SMA's.

Existing wilderness study areas should not be considered for ACEC designation.

We thank you again for the opportunity to comment on your draft plan. We hope these comments will be considered in your formulation of a final plan. Finally, we would again like to emphasize our request, for the reasons stated previously, for additional opportunities to review the impact of the plan, to meet with the BLM and to submit additional written comments.

Submitted herewith in support of the preceding comments are Exhibits A through L.

Thank you.

73-25 See response to Hearing Comment LO3-22.

74

SIERRA
CLUB
SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO GROUP
P.O. Box 3705 UPB Las Cruces, NM 88003

November 24, 1991

RMP Team Leader
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, N.M. 88005

Dear Sir:

The Southern New Mexico Group of the Sierra Club appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft Resource Management Plan for the Mimbres Resource Area. As might be expected we support Alternative B which emphasizes preservation of environmental values. 74-1 We do object to a process which sets up three "straw man" alternatives and then compromises on a fourth which the agency preferred from the beginning. We urge that the long range objectives (20 years and beyond) be given more weight in considering the future management actions for the Mimbres Resource Area.

The BLM would be well advised to look at management of its resources in a more holistic manner. Each action taken affects the entire habitat not just that of wildlife, livestock, cultural resources, etc. The public lands must be viewed more as reservoirs for biological diversity which in the long run will sustain continued consumptive uses.

What will be done or not done in the adopted alternative will depend largely on available funding for these activities. We hope that the Bureau will lobby as hard for funds to accomplish the preservations goals as for those which promote development.

Ben Zerbey
Ben Zerbey, Chair
Southern New Mexico Group, Sierra Club

74-1 The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), and BLM regulations (40 CFR 1502.14 and 43 CFR 1610.4-5) require that a reasonable range of alternatives be considered, including the no action alternative. In addition, the agency's preferred alternative must also be identified.

75

BILL CAVALIERE
P.O. BOX 102,
ANIMAS, NM 88020
(505) 548-2328

DEAR MR SALT,

IT HAS COME TO MY ATTENTION THAT THERE IS A PLAN PROPOSED FOR THE ACQUISITION OF MORE LAND IN THE BOOTHEEL AREA OF NEW MEXICO (HIDALGO COUNTY). I WOULD LIKE IT ON RECORD THAT I AM OPPOSED TO ANY LAND BEING ACQUIRED, BE IT PRIVATE LAND OR EVEN MORE BLM. AS IT WAS EXPLAINED TO ME, "ALTERNATIVE A" COMES CLOSEST TO MY FEELINGS ON THIS.

SINCERELY,

Bill Cavaliere

76

216 S. Nickel
Deming, NM 88030
November 24, 1991

RPM Team Leader
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

To Whom It May Concern:

In various letters to the Las Cruces BLM office, congressional delegations, Deming Headlight, and Las Cruces Sun-News, we have touched upon wilderness desirability for the Florida Mountains, the Cooke's Range, and the Cedar Mountains in Luna County. There's little point in rehashing all of that. Wilderness is still the main preference for these three areas.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) are a come-down for these sites. However, on the theory that half a loaf is better than none, we support Alternative B for all the ACEC areas listed in Appendix H-I.

We especially wish to emphasize the need for Alternative B on the following ACECS:

Apache Box
Cooke's Range
Florida Mountains
Tres Hermanas
Massacre Peak
Old Town
Paleozoic Trackways
Robledo Mountains
Gila Middle Box
Continental Divide
Cedar Mountains
Pony Hills
Fort Cummings
Butterfield Trail
National Scenic Trail

We also support Wild and Scenic River status for the Gila Middle Box and the Gila Lower Box. These designations are an absolute must.

Please rethink wilderness applicability for the Florida Mountains, the Cooke's Range, and the Cedar Mountains.

We are all going to be dead and gone someday, but the land will remain.

Cordially,

M. Edward Nesselroad
M. Edward Nesselroad

Patricia K. Danser
Patricia K. Danser

77

TIM SALT
BLM
1800 MARQUESS ST.
LAS CRUCES, NM. 88005

JAMES R. WALTER
HC65 BOX 265-K
ANIMAS NM. 88020

Dear Mr. Salt

I would like to go on record as being against any attempt of the BLM taking over any land from I-10 to the Grey Ranch. Why can't you people just leave things alone? Let us live in peace and raise our cows.

Sincerely,
JAmes R. Walter
James R Walter

78

TIM SALT
BLM
1800 MARQUESS ST.
LAS CRUCES, NM. 88005

IDA WALTER
HC65 BOX 265-K
ANIMAS NM. 88020

Dear Mr. Salt

I would like to go on record as being against any attempt of the BLM taking over any land from I-10 to the Grey Ranch. Why can't you people just leave things alone?

Sincerely,
Ida Walter
Ida Walter

78

Star Route Box 26
Mesilla Park, NM 88047

Tim Salt
Mimbres Resource Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Tim:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Mimbres Resource Management Plan (DMRMP.) Let me commend you for a generally comprehensive and well-organized plan.

Let me also congratulate you on formulating an excellent alternative: Alternative B. While it is not perfect, it provides a good foundation on which to base management of the Mimbres Resource Area over the next 20 years. I wish to go on record as being strongly in support of Alternative B.

However, since Alternative B is *not* BLM's preferred alternative and you are not likely to deviate from the preferred option, I will direct my specific comments towards those elements of Alternative D that need improvement.

Biological Diversity

Federal public lands, because of their size and potential for protective management, offer the last hope for saving what remains of our nation's biological heritage. As the agency charged with stewardship of the largest public land system in America, the BLM has a responsibility to restore and safeguard the original biotic diversity found on its lands.

The BLM recognizes this responsibility. The DMRMP states:

> It is the responsibility of the Mimbres Resource Area to identify opportunities to maintain, improve, and expand wildlife habitat on the public land for both consumptive and non-consumptive uses *as well as biological diversity.* [page 2-24, emphasis added.]

The BLM's plan for wildlife in New Mexico (*New Mexico Fish and Wildlife 2000*) sets as its first goal:

> Manage public lands habitat to support a natural abundance and diversity of wildlife, with emphasis on the recovery of special status species.

The Mimbres Resource Area contains significant biological values. The preferred alternative (D) does not do enough to protect these values. To the contrary, the plan threatens to allow those values to be lost through continued and future misuse of public lands.

79

Historic Diversity

79-1 There is little discussion of historic diversity and wildlife abundance in the Mimbres Resource Area. Without knowing how many antelope, for example, formerly occured in the area, it is difficult to evaluate the adequacy of proposed population goals and habitat management plans. The goal should be to restore native wildlife to their former abundance.

ACECs and SMAs

Since the DMRMP does not address wilderness, designation of ACECs and other special management areas provides the best tool for protecting large blocks of habitat and overall diversity. However, ACECs proposed under Alternative D are inadequate for protecting the array of biotic values found in the Mimbres Resource Area.

Alamo Hueco

The plan calls for only 16,260 acres to be included in an ACEC. The entire WSA and surrounding lands (total = 32,000 acres) should be designated as an ACEC to protect this biologically important area. Four of New Mexico's 14 major biotic communities are found here, as well as many special status species. Livestock grazing should be eliminated.

Big Hatchet Mountains

This is another important area for diversity, containing six major biotic communities and many special status species. Alternative D would designate only 47,180 acres as an ACEC. The entire WSA and surrounding lands (total = 91,219 acres) should be included.

Cedar Mountains

79-2 No justification was provided in the plan for not proposing to include this WSA within an ACEC. It is an important area biologically, containing examples of five biomes, including semidesert grassland and Madrean evergreen woodland. The WSA and surrounding areas (total = 106,000 acres) should be designated as an ACEC. Livestock grazing should be excluded.

Central Peloncillo Mountains

I support your decision to designate this area as an ACEC. Livestock grazing should be eliminated in recognition of the area's outstanding value as a biological corridor.

Cooke's Range

I support your proposal to designate this area as an ACEC.

Cowboy Springs

The proposed ACEC is much too small to protect the biological values found in this area, which include five major biomes and many rare plants and animals. The ACEC should be enlarged to include 40,000 acres.

79-1 Population goals are required by BLM's Supplemental Program Guidance for RMPs. A determination of the population size which the habitat can support will be made when the Habitat Management Plans (HMPs) are developed. We do know that pronghorn antelope, for example, formerly occurred in the areas proposed for development of HMPs. Specific data concerning past population number are not available.

79-2 The Cedar Mountains were considered for ACEC designation under Alternative B. The Cedar Mountains were not considered under the Proposed Plan because, considering the objectives of the alternative, the values of other resources outweighed the need for special management attention and standard management prescriptions outlined elsewhere in the plan would provide sufficient protection.

79

Gila Lower Box
Again, the proposed ACEC is too small to protect this extremely important riparian area. It should be expanded to include 19,000 acres. I support your proposal to close the area to vehicle use.

Gila Middle Box
The existing ACEC should be enlarged to 5000 acres.

Granite Gap
This area contains a high diversity of reptiles and cacti, and occupied bighorn sheep habitat. The proposed ACEC should be enlarged to include 22,000 acres.

Robledo Mountains
The proposed ACEC is too small to protect this area, important for its biological resources as well as the opportunity it provides for outdoor recreation near a rapidly growing urban area. The ACEC should be enlarged to include 82,000 acres.

Extirpated Species

A major shortcoming of the proposed plan is its failure to discuss opportunities to reintroduce extirpated native wildlife in the Mimbres Resource Area.

Mexican Wolf
Portions of the Mimbres Resource Area provided important wolf habitat in the past, especially the Bootheel area, and in particular the Alamo Hueco Mountains, Cowboy Spring, Guadalupe Canyon, and the Peloncillo Mountains. These and other areas should be managed in cooperation with the Forest Service, the Nature Conservancy, and other land managers to facilitate Mexican wolf reintroduction.

79-3 The BLM does not fulfill its obligation under the Endangered Species Act merely be declaring that since there are no wolves in the area now, it has no obligation to consider wolves in its management plan. A 20-year management plan should include the goal of providing suitable habitat to support reintroduction efforts.

The BLM should not wait for other agencies to take the initiative in wildlife reintroductions. While the states have traditionally assumed lead responibility in managing wildlife within their borders, the Supreme Court has upheld the authority of federal agencies to manage wildlife on federal lands. Accordingly, the BLM should take a leadership role in promoting Mexican wolf reintroduction.

River Otter
The plan also fails to discuss the potential for reintroducing river otters in their historic range within the planning area. The Gila Middle Box and Gila Lower Box should be managed for river otter reintroduction.

Vehicle Management

The proposed plan would provide too little control over vehicle use. Given the proven destructive nature of ORVs to plants, soil, and wildlife, and in light of BLM's

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79-3 The Continuing Management Guidance (page 2-34) addresses special status species and BLM responsibilities. BLM policy states: "All wildlife introductions, transplants and releases require a cooperative agreement with the appropriate State wildlife agency." In addition, the Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan (USFWS 1982) addresses the steps to be taken for a re-introduction of this species.

inadequate enforcement capability in New Mexico, vehicle use should be restricted to designated roads and trails. ACECs, WSAs, fragile soils, and other special management areas should be closed to vehicle use.

Animal Damage Control

Predator control should not be allowed unless *confirmed* losses exceed 5 percent on an allotment. Preventative actions (in advance of depredations) should not be allowed under any circumstances.

Grazing Management

Stocking levels on allotments classified as being in "poor" and "fair" condition should be reduced until the range can be restored to "good."

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Kevin Bixby

Kevin Bixby

80

DUANE COLEMAN
RAFTER JL RANCH
P. O. Box 653
Lordsburg, NM 88045

November 25, 1991

MR. TIM SALT
Bureau of Land Management
Members Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

I am deeply concerned with the proposed changes made in the August 1991 Draft R. M. P./E. I. S. I feel that any cut in current A. U. M.'s should be denied. I feel the local economy as well as the rangeland would suffer greatly if the proposed reductions were implemented.

I am also disturbed with the B. L. M.'s decision in choosing the Nature Conservancy to conduct many of the R. M. P./E. I. S. studies. I feel they are biased in their determinations as land acquisition is one of their chief goals.

Sincerely,

DUANE COLEMAN
Rafter JL Ranch
Lordsburg, NM 88045

81

November 22, 1991

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

RE: Comments on Draft Resource Management Plan

Dear Sir:

My first comment: What a piece of work! I plan to keep this very impressive volume at hand as reference and guide. There are, however, some areas of specific concern to which I would like to comment.

I would like to add my support of Alternative B over Alternative D in general. Specific, additional comments:

Livestock Grazing. In view of the fact that there are 347 allotments but only 21 have implemented AMP's while only 25 more are only in the planning stage; it would seem Alternate B with 201,470 acres eliminated rather than Alternate D with only 8,026 acres would be a better management choice in favor of vegetation, soil and water.

Wildlife. I noticed in Alternate B, there is an expressed preference for "natural" biodiversity. There is, however, built-in conflict: 1) the ibex; I hope this human error can be dealt with in a humane manner. 2) ADC. I support natural biodiversity to include "natural" predators and "natural" prey species. As you may be aware, there is a growing nationwide movement against ADC with its brutality, assault against biodiversity, as well as the high cost to taxpayers. We would like to see good grazing management to enhance all wildlife habitat; and Greater Rancher Responsibility to protect "their" livestock and "their" profits. Better animal husbandry would reduce "other" types of loss of livestock as well. There are many built-in costs to any business, this is understood by most. Yet cattle and timber continue to demand and to be heavily subsidized. Why?

I hope my comments will be regarded as intended: in the best interest of the environment, and all life therein. Again, I would like to say, Good Show with what appears to me to be an impressive and well directed effort.

Sincerely,

Karen Fuller
651 Tumbleweed
Chaparral, NM 88021

82

TIM SALT
BLM
1800 MARQUESS ST.
LAS CRUCES, NM. 88005

DON R. KERR
HC65 BOX 266
ANIMAS NM. 88020

Dear Mr. Salt

I would like to go on record as being against any attempt of the BLM taking over any land from I-10 to the Grey Ranch. I feel this is an infringement on our rights as citizens of the United States and New Mexico we are trying to make a living here and its hard enough without all the environmentalist raising havoc and trying to legally steel our land.

Sincerely,
Don R. Kerr

Don R. Kerr

83

11-25-91

RMP Team Leader,

Sorry for this short note on the last day to respond. I am aware of the current condition of the BLM Lands. That is, a scant 10 – 30% in really acceptable shape. Overgrazing by the cattle industry is still the normal situation and little land is in an upward trend ecologically speaking.

Since the BLM has not been able to get a handle on this problem yet, I would like to suggest a phase out of grazing on all BLM Lands. This would also end the need for Animal Damage Control killing our wildlife on our land for the benefit of an already dying industry. Hunting, fishing, watershed protection scenic quality, Bird + watchable wildlife would benefit enormously.

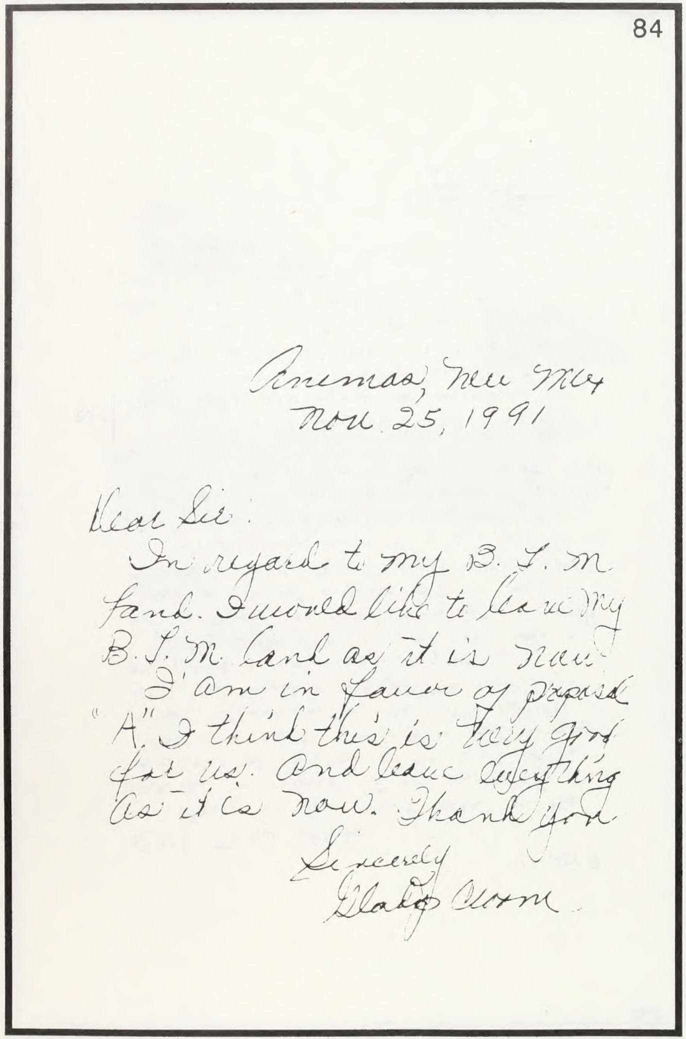
83-1 I'm curious why the WSA's are now called Areas of Critical Environmental Concerns. I have visited a number of them and would like to see them all become wilderness without cattle grazing.

Thanks for the opportunity to respond. I will finish reading the E.I.S. and am anxiously awaiting the final plan.

Quite Sincerely,

Michael G. Sauber
707 W 8th St.
Silver City, NM 88061

83-1 The ACEC proposals are completely independent of existing WSA designations. No WSAs have been dropped, or will be dropped until Congress drops them. The only WSAs analyzed in the Draft RMP are new ones where the BLM has consolidated public land ownership since the Statewide Wilderness EIS. Livestock grazing is an established and acceptable use in wilderness according to the guidance established by Congress in the Wilderness Act and subsequent wilderness legislation.



84

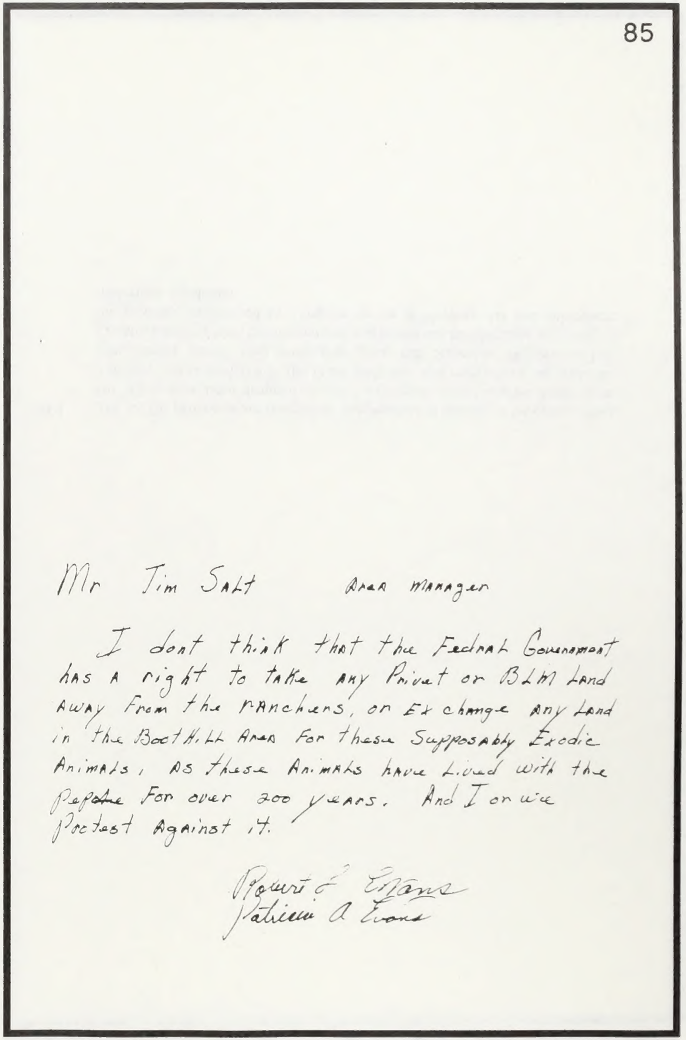
Animas, New Mex
Nov. 25, 1991

Dear Sir:

In regard to my B. L. M. land. I would like to leave my B. L. M. land as it is now.

I am in favor of propsd "A" I think this is very good for us. And leave everything as it is now. Thank you

Sincerely
Gladys Acorn



85

Mr Tim Salt   Area Manager

I dont think that the Fedral Government has a right to take any Privet or BLM Land away from the ranchers, or Exchange any Land in the BootHill Area for these Supposably Exodic Animals, As these Animals have Lived with the Pepole For over 200 years. And I or we Protest Against it.

Robert E. Evans
Patricia A Evans

86

November 25, 1991

RMP Team Leader
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Dear Sirs:

My wife and I are in favor of the Multiple Use Plan, which includes livestock, mining, recreation and wildlife. We are opposed to displacement of livestock to any wildlife, they have always been compatible. We would like the present grazing fee formula to remain in place.

We are opposed to any more wilderness areas involving federal land. We are also against the Federal Government acquiring any more private land.

James V. McCarty

J. V. McCarty

87

November 24, 1991
P.O. Box 13
Rodeo, New Mexico 88056

United States Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Dear Mr. Salt,

87-1 We were finally made aware of the Draft Resource Management Impact Statement yesterday and after the short time we had to study this costly and lengthy document we have come to the decision that the program is another way to relieve the land owner of his personal and private property which we have worked several lifetimes to preserve and manage.

We are aware of the shortage of tax money at this time and the many programs which the government has which cannot be properly funded. Why do agencies such as the one you work try to remove lands and income from the tax base?

Most government programs are poorly managed while those programs which private enterprise manage, work well until the government steps in and tries to manage. When government takes over the loss of tax revenue is eminent.

The talk of rural development is now in the forefront and your agency is trying to stop rural development by putting rural America out of business.

The only option which we can see is for your agency to sell the small and unmanageable portions of land to the contiguous land owners, put the money into the national debt and then get the "Hell" out of our lives.

Sincerely,

William C. Miller Jr.
William C. Miller Jr.
Carol A. Miller
Carrol A. Miller

cc
Joe Skeen, Pete Dominici, Manual Lujan, Jeff Bingaman, John A. Smith & file

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87-1 Public involvement has been an important part of the development of the RMP, beginning in 1989. Prior to public meetings held in Lordsburg, Silver City, Deming, Las Cruces, and El Paso in July 1989, a Scoping Report was distributed which outlined issues, management concerns, and planning criteria to be used as a framework for developing the RMP. All grazing permittees were sent a copy of the Scoping Report which also contained the times and places of the public meetings. A Follow-up Report was issued in November 1989, which contained revisions based upon public review and comment. On June 25, 1990, a letter was sent out to update the public (including permittees) on the status of the RMP. The Draft RMP/EIS was distributed in August 1991, with the 90-day public comment period beginning on August 23, 1991. At that time, news releases were sent to all major newspapers, radio and television stations in the area.

To save money, the complete Draft RMP/EIS was not sent to everyone on the mailing list. Most grazing permittees and a number of other individuals were sent a summary document which contained a cover letter and summary of Alternatives and Impacts. The cover letter contained information on the times and places for public meetings and how to get a copy of the full document. Public meetings were held in Lordsburg, Silver City, Deming, Las Cruces, and El Paso in September 1991. Public hearings (to receive oral comments) were held in Lordsburg and Las Cruces in October 1991.

Because of the concerns raised by yourselves and others, we held nearly 20 additional small group meetings over a 3-month period between January and April 1992 (after the close of the official comment period on the Draft RMP) to listen and respond to these concerns. Many of the changes in the Proposed Plan are a direct outcome of those meetings.

88

Post Office Canyon Ranch
P.O. Box 34
Rodeo, New Mexico 88056
November 24, 1991

Tom Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

We are writing to you concerning Draft Resource Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement.

88-1 First let us say that we are overwhelmed by the way this huge study was revealed to us and the short time that we have been given to reply to an issue that is so vital to our future and the future of our nation. The very idea that you would give us or the three previous generations, who's survival made it possible for us to continue on, no consideration at all. It appear that all the time, money, and effort that has been put into this study, has been to destroy us rather than to help. We are producers and we do contribute a lot to our nation and our fellow man. This study proposes that we be deprived of this obligation.

We find that none of the proposals are acceptable to us and that anything which is done to take away our freedom of operation, is devastating to us. You are proposing an untried, unlikely management plan that has no future in it, even if it should work, and we have never seen any bureaucratic operation that has ever been successful.

We would propose that if you are interested in the future of this country, that you sell the isolated parcels of BLM to the people and apply the money on our enormous national debt. We have managed to do a super job of preserving the wild life with just a little cooperation from nature, and could do an ever a better job if we could plan our own management.

In closing we urge that an extension time be given for this serious matter which will have such a grave consequence on our local community, our county, our nation, and all those who have to eat.

Yours truly,
Post Office Canyon Ranch

W. C. Miller Sr.
[illegible] C. Miller, Sr.

Adeline Miller
Adeline Miller

cc: Manuel Lujan, Joe Skeen, Pete Dominici, Jeff Bingaman, John Smith, & File

88-1 See response to Comment 87-1.

JB Strickland
Box 351
Animas, NM 88020
11-24-91

Tim Salt
BLM
1800 Marquess St.
Las Cruces NM 88005

Dear Mr Salt:

I am a believer in Conservation. I also believe in guns and freedom.

It was brought to my attention this morning that there was a movement to turn the whole bootheel of New Mexico into something like the Carrizo Plains Natural Area – The Koquilles & a number of other Nature Conservancy projects.

Wouldn't it be better to watch some good management on the millions of acres already under Conservancy control, than go to the grazing waste?

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] you in considering [illegible] [illegible]

Sincerely,

JB Strickland

90

HC 65 Box 171
Animas, N.M. 88020
Nov. 25, 1991

Jim Sall, BLM
Las Cruces District Office
1800 Marquess St.
Las Cruces, N.M. 88005

Dear Mr Sall,

We are writing in response to the BLM land use proposals in your Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Study dated August 1991.

We live in the central Peloncillo mountain district, 17 miles south of Animas, and after studying proposals A, B, C & D we do not feel that management concerns are being adequately addressed by the proposed actions.

Plan A allows anyone access through private land to reach public lands and would therefore interfere with proper cattle management.

Plan B, C & D prohibit livestock and range improvements and would effectively eliminate cattle ranching.

90-1 We are wondering if the economic impact of these measures has been considered or if an economic impact study has been done in regard to the loss of income to this area if the proposals are implemented.

It is our feeling that cooperation be-

90-1 See response to Comment 51-2.

90

tween each individual rancher and the area studied would be a more beneficial way of administering BLM land.

Sincerely,

Clinton E Dunagan
Frances Gail Dunagan

91

DRAFT MIMBRES RMP/EIS

COMMENT SHEET

Your comments on the Draft RMP are valuable to us in the decision-making process. You may use this form to comment or you may wish to do so in writing by letter. Your answers to the following questions are appreciated. Please be as specific as you can. If you need additional space for your answers, please continue on another piece of paper.

1. Do you feel that resolution of the Issues and Management Concerns is adequately addressed by the Proposed Action or one of the Alternatives?

With a few subtractions & additions.

2. If not, what actions would you recommend to resolve the Issues and Management Concerns? Please be specific.

91-1 On a timed and/or rotation practice we know that 40% utilization is not in the best interest of the BLM, the permittee or the surrounding communities. We feel that a type of monitoring system that took into consideration a wide variety of plant species with less barren ground which would in turn be conducive to a better water shed, should be considered, instead of, or in conjunction with utilization monitoring

91-1 See response to Comment 20-5.

91

Additional comments or concerns (please be specific):

We oppose the reduction of livestock or the taking of public lands with out due cause or justification. We realize that there will be times when the taking of public lands will be justified, but we recommend consideration and compensation at these times.

We thank you for your support and consideration of our comments. We realize that the task before you is going to be a thankless one, but with continued communication, collaboration and cooperation our objectives can be achieved.

Thank you
Jay Peterson
Kelly Peterson

92

Jim Salt,

Dear Sir

92-1 It is understued that the Land In Southern Hidalgo County is ~~Ber~~ to be condemed & bought by Who Ever –

I Would Like For the Lease & Land to be the Same as befor if you want to Sell it Sell to the Ranchers they are the ones who took care of it For Years payed out Lots of Money For Leases & care & Repairs of things that needed to be Fixed

Jim Evans

92-1 This plan states that the Mimbres Resource Area's goal is to use the exchange program or direct purchase to acquire State trust and private inholdings within ACECs or other areas that have high resource values or unique characteristics.

The BLM does not have legal authority to condemn land for acquisition. Condemnation cannot and will not be used to consolidate public land in the Resource Area. Exchanges or direct purchase will involve a willing seller.

93

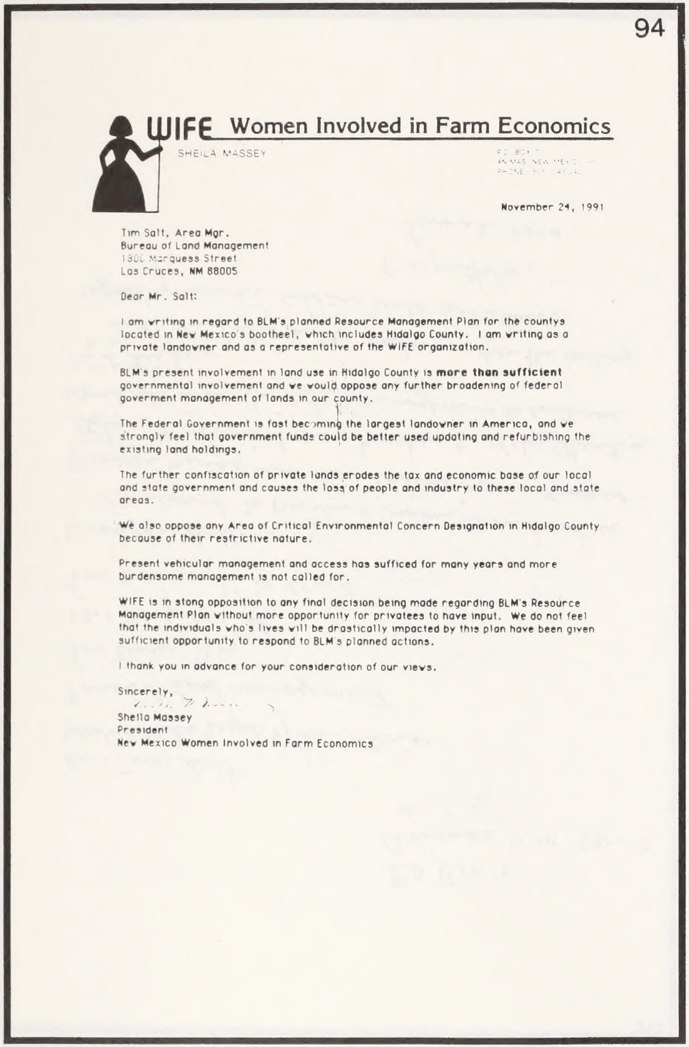
Dear Tim Salt

93-1 I understand that the Land in the Southun port of Hidalgo county is to condemed + bought by

I would Like to have the Land + Lease Stay as is.
or if you Wont to sell B.L.M.
Land sell it to the Ranchers they have
Been the ones to take care of it for
years - they have been out Lots + mony on
Leases + Improvement + Reseeding
+ Soil conservetion Ect.

Henry Washburn

93-1 See response to Comment 92-1.



94

WIFE Women Involved in Farm Economics
SHEILA MASSEY

P.O. BOX [illegible]
ANIMAS, NEW MEXICO [illegible]
PHONE [illegible]

November 24, 1991

Tim Salt, Area Mgr.
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

I am writing in regard to BLM's planned Resource Management Plan for the countys located in New Mexico's bootheel, which includes Hidalgo County. I am writing as a private landowner and as a representative of the WIFE organization.

BLM's present involvement in land use in Hidalgo County is **more than sufficient** governmental involvement and we would oppose any further broadening of federal goverment management of lands in our county.

The Federal Government is fast becoming the largest landowner in America, and we strongly feel that government funds could be better used updating and refurbishing the existing land holdings.

The further confiscation of private lands erodes the tax and economic base of our local and state government and causes the loss of people and industry to these local and state areas.

We also oppose any Area of Critical Environmental Concern Designation in Hidalgo County because of their restrictive nature.

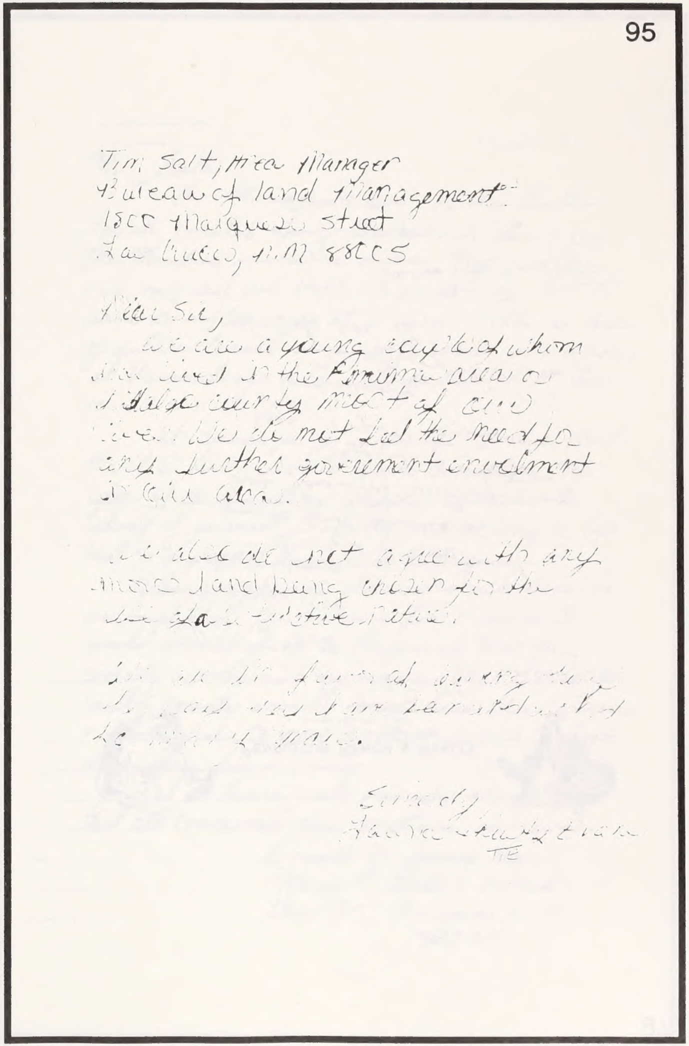
Present vehicular management and access has sufficed for many years and more burdensome management is not called for.

WIFE is in stong opposition to any final decision being made regarding BLM's Resource Management Plan without more opportunity for privatees to have input. We do not feel that the individuals who's lives will be drastically impacted by this plan have been given sufficient opportunity to respond to BLM's planned actions.

I thank you in advance for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

Sheila Massey
President
New Mexico Women Involved in Farm Economics



95

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of land Management
1800 Marquess street
Las Cruces, N.M 88005

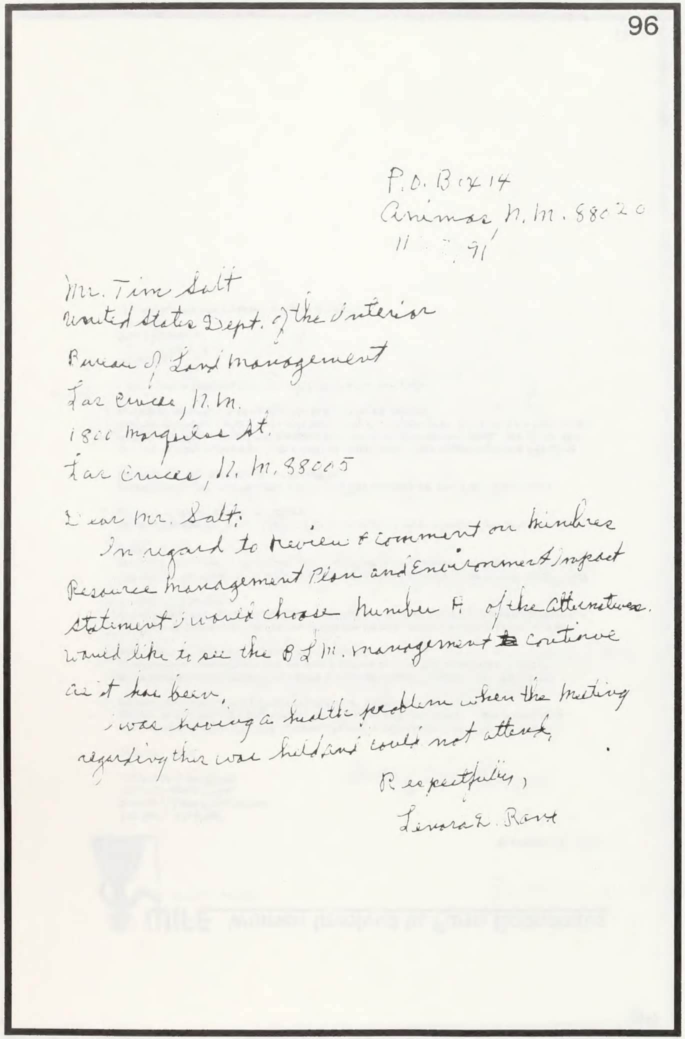
Dear Sir,

We are a young couple of whom have lived in the Animas area of Hidalgo county most of our lives. We do not feel the need for any further government envolment in our area.

We also do not agree with any more land being chosen for the [illegible] restrictive nature.

[illegible] farm [illegible] many years.

Sincerely



96

P.O. Box 14
Animas, N.M. 88020
11 [illegible], 91

Mr. Tim Salt
United States Dept. of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Las Cruces, N.M.
1800 Marquess St.
Las Cruces, N.M. 88005

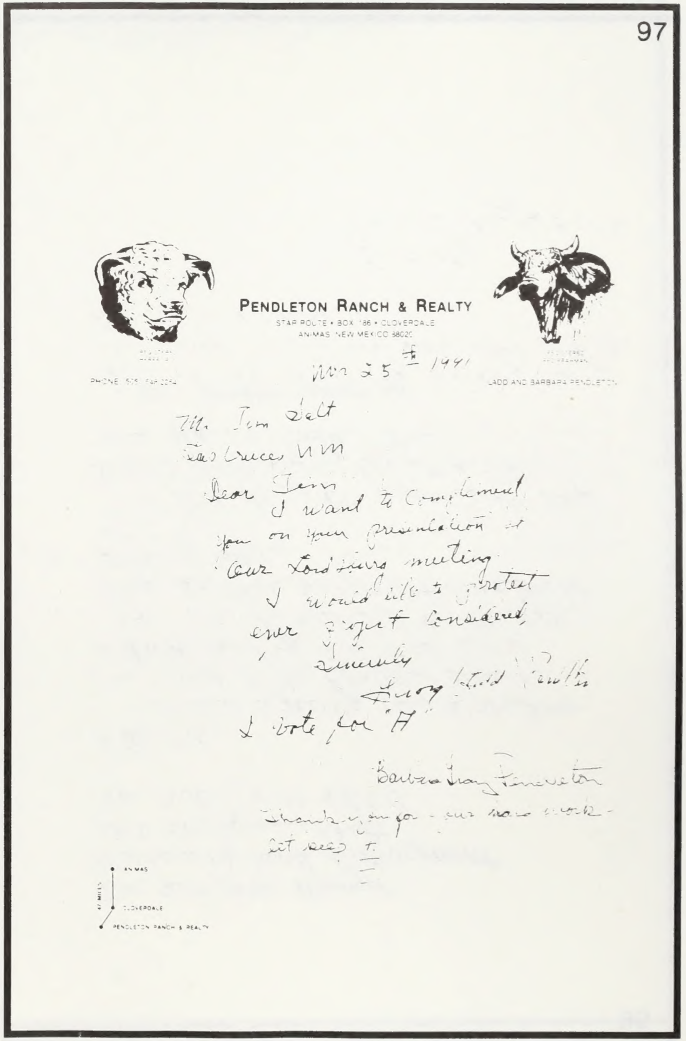
Dear Mr. Salt:

In regard to review & comment on Mimbres Resource Management Plan and Environment Impact statement I would choose Number A of the Alternatives. would like to see the BLM. management ~~to~~ continue as it has been.

I was having a health problem when the meeting regarding this was held and could not attend.

Respectfully,

Lenora E. Rowe



97

PENDLETON RANCH & REALTY
STAR ROUTE • BOX 186 • CLOVERDALE
ANIMAS, NEW MEXICO 88020

PHONE (505) [illegible]

LADD AND BARBARA PENDLETON

Nov 25th 1991

Mr. Tim Salt
Las Cruces NM

Dear Tim

I want to compliment you on your presentation at our Lordsburg meeting.

I would like to protest our project considered,

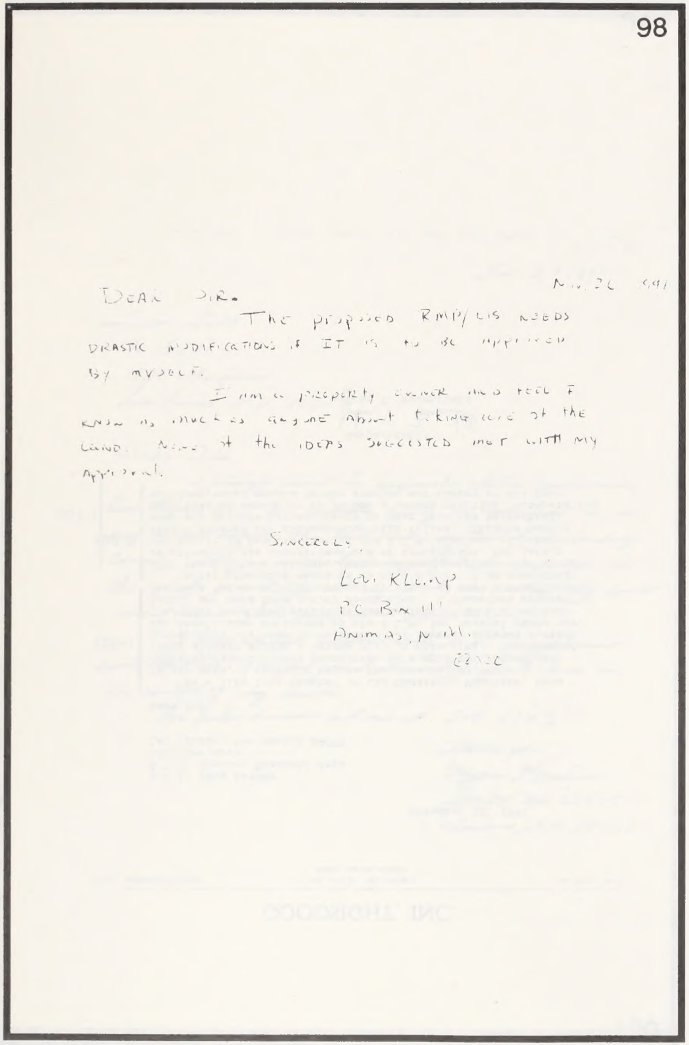
Sincerely

Leroy (Ladd) Pendleton

I vote for "A"

Barbara Leroy Pendleton

Thank you for your hard work - let keep it.



98

Nov. 26 1991

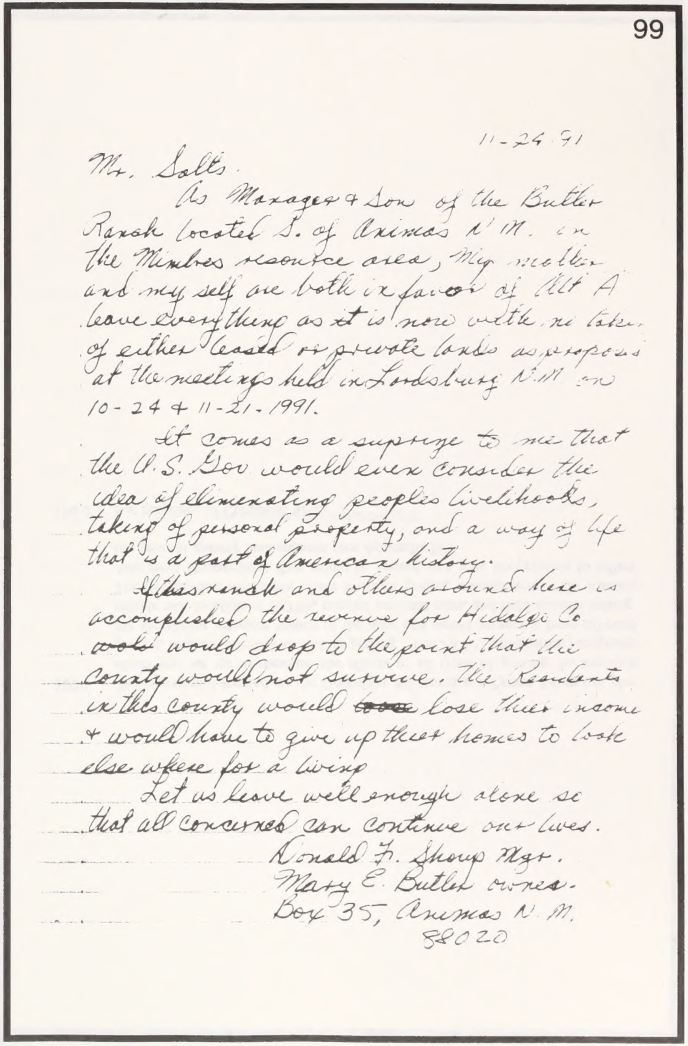
DEAR SIR.

THE proposed RMP/EIS NEEDS DRASTIC MODIFICATIONS if IT is to BE approved BY MYSELF.

I am a property owner and feel I know as much as anyone about taking care of the LAND. None of the IDEAS SUGGESTED met with my approval.

SINCERELY

Lou KLUMP
PO Box 111
Animas, N.M.
88020



99

11-24-91

Mr. Salts.

As Manager & Son of the Butler Ranch located S. of Animas N.M. in the Mimbres resource area, My mother and my self are both in favor of Alt A leave everything as it is now with no taking of either leased or private lands as proposed at the meetings held in Lordsburg N.M. on 10-24 & 11-21-1991.

It comes as a suprize to me that the U.S. Gov would even consider the idea of elimenating peoples livelihoods, taking of personal property, and a way of life that is a part of American history.

If this ranch and others around here is accomplished the revenue for Hidalgo Co ~~wold~~ would drop to the point that the County would not survive. The Residents in this county would ~~[illegible]~~ lose their income & would have to give up their homes to look else where for a living

Let us leave well enough alone so that all concerned can continue our lives.

Donald F. Shoup Mgr.
Mary E. Butler owner.
Box 35, Animas N.M.
88020

100

GOODSIGHT, INC.

Property, Perhaps Profit
JOHN V. BROWNFIELD President
(505) 546-3726 (505) 546-3675
Deming, New Mexico 88030
Star Route 2, Box 25

November 22, 1991

R.M.P. Team Leader
B.L.M. Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Dear Sir:

100-1 As a life long rancher in the Goodsight Mountain, Uvas Valley Area, I strongly oppose the Uvas Valley ACEC. Justification for this opposition is simple but documented; there already exists a survey plot in this area. The Diamond Survey Plot has been in existence for several decades already, but hasn't been monitored by the B.L.M. for several years now. This plot more than satisfies the desires of an ACEC without taking any more land out of production. I therefore propose the Uvas Valley ACEC be dropped for lack of need and duplication.

100-2 After attending meetings on this R.M.P., I am concerned with the B.L.M.'s ultimate option of condemnation. Our mutual relationship has always been one of cooperation, but lately the public is hearing that if the B.L.M.'s offers of purchase aren't adhered to; condemnation will follow. This is hardly what any private citizen wants to hear from any bureaucrat; much less to expect it to become a common practice. Cooperation and Compromise should be the avenue, not taking at all cost.

Respectfully,

John V. Brownfield
John V. Brownfield

100-1 The survey plot located on the Goodsight Allotment is a Parker 3-step test plot which was set up to measure the effects of all types of grazing, no livestock grazing, and no livestock or rodent grazing. The ACEC designation recognizes the significant resource values of the area and would protect it from off-road vehicle use, location of ROWs, mineral material sales, and fluid mineral leasing. The designation would not affect livestock grazing management. The existing Allotment Management Plan would be revised with your cooperation to reflect the present grazing management (see Appendix H).

100-2 See response to Comment 92-1.

101

I want to leave things as they are now. Myra Mahan

Nov. 23, 1991

Tim Salt
% BLM
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, N.M. 88005

Dear Tim,

101-1 I strongly protest the proposals Nature Conservancie has before BLM to condemn & buy or trade for or in any means acquire the land under my control in Hidalgo County. Being a nature lover myself I love & protect all the plant & animal life on my ranch as well as *they* could and I resent their implications otherwise.

I have always complied with BLM's regulations & will continue to do so, and I'm asking you to leave me in control of my lands.

For further discussion call me at 548-2343.

Thank you.
Myra K. Mahan
Star Rt. Box 265-F
Animas, N.M. 88020

101-1 See response to Comment 92-1.

102

Nov, 24, 1991

Dear Mr. Salt.

I feel the people who own land and live in the Bootheel area of New Mexico, have tried and succeeded in living their lives in harmony with the wild life of the area, and they have done this for many many years.

The lands have not been marred by the land owners or their cattle, the restictions placed on the cattle grazing are followed in the area.

My parents, grandparents, and myself have lived in this area all our lives, and I feel it hasn't changed in all these years. So I am asking you to please leave it the way it is.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely yours,
Sam W. Presley

103

Area Code 505
PHONE 548-2247

WM. COWAN RANCHES

Animas, New Mexico McNeal, Arizona

Mailing Address:
Cloverdale Ranch
Animas, New Mexico

Nov. 25, 1991

Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Sirs;

I do not feel that the resolution of the Issues and Management Concerns is adequately address by the Proposed Action or one of the Alternatives. Therefore, I feel the A-B-C-D Alternatives need further consideration before any permanant decision is made.

Specifically:

103-1 I do not believe that Blm permittees and owners of land adjoining BLM properties have been contacted or considered or allowed to participate in the studies. They are also stewards of the land and really know what problem areas are and have had to adjust their cattle operation accordingly.

103-2 Have you considered the economic impact that will be a problem, not only to the permittees, but to Hidalgo County, and the State of New Mexico. As you suggest in some of your alternatives, What about the lives of residents that will be disturbed. and even forced out of the ranching business, by your decisions?

I believe that the entire study should be reconsidered with more involvment by permittees before any permanent decision is made on your study.Very few of your permittees have even heard of your study, much less, been given one of your studies for reviewal.

My concernis not only the Guadalupe Canyon ACEC, but for the whole Mimbres recource area; and the lives that will be adversely affected by your bad decisions.

The Federal Government has too much land all ready, and does not need to acquire land. Less Government control is better control.

Sincerely

Mrs William R Cowan

Mrs. William R. Cowan
HC 65 Box 185
Animas, New Mexico 88020

103-1 See response to Comment 87-1.

103-2 See response to Comment 51-2.

104

November 22, 1991

RESOLUTION

At the recent meeting of Hidalgo County Cattlegrowers Association, Tim Salt, BLM District Manager of Las Cruces and other BLM staff explained some issues and answered questions concerning the Range Management Plan draft. One of the issues not resolved was restriction on Areas of Critical Concern (ACEC's) By unanimous vote, the Association adopted the following resolution:

Whereas the Las Cruces District Bureau of Land Management proposes a draft Range Management Plan with a number of Areas of Critical Concern with management prescriptions which unduly restricts use, and are contrary to the multiple use, sustained yield principle of management.

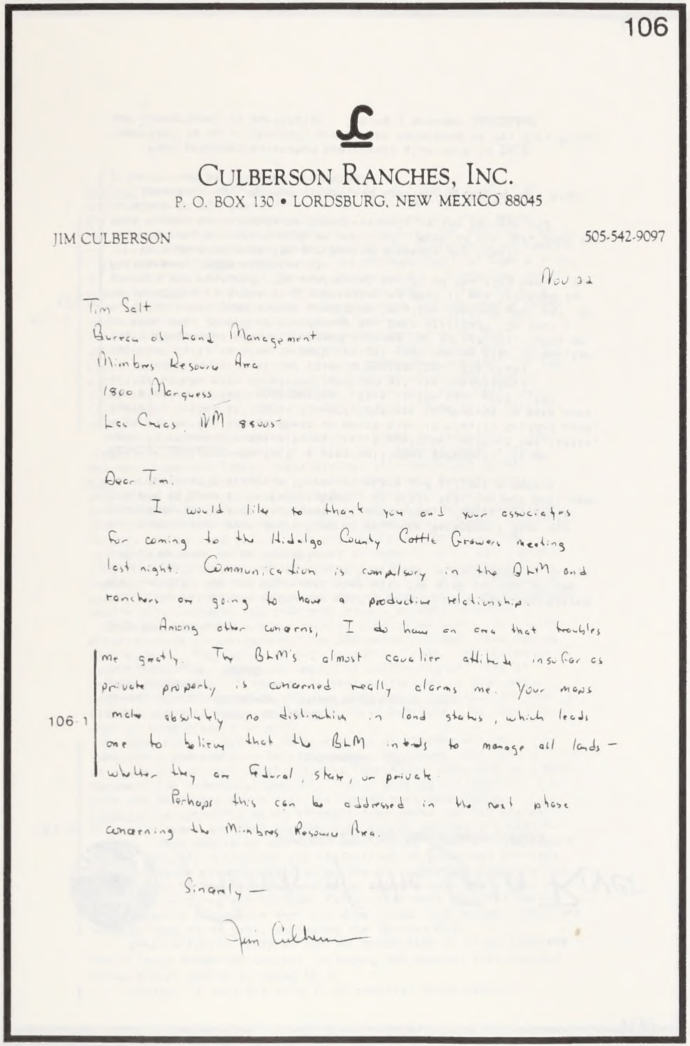
Whereas the last date for comments is November 25, 1991 and will not be extended. Therefore the Association conveys its comments to the BLM. The Association recommends the elimination of all Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.

Sincerely,

Dave Shannon, HCCGA
Secretary
Hidalgo County Cattlegrowers' Association

P.O. Box 446
Lordsburg, NM 88045

106



CULBERSON RANCHES, INC.
P. O. BOX 130 • LORDSBURG, NEW MEXICO 88045
JIM CULBERSON 505-542-9097

Nov 22

Tim Selt
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Tim:

I would like to thank you and your associates for coming to the Hidalgo County Cattle Growers meeting last night. Communication is compulsory in the BLM and ranchers are going to have a productive relationship.

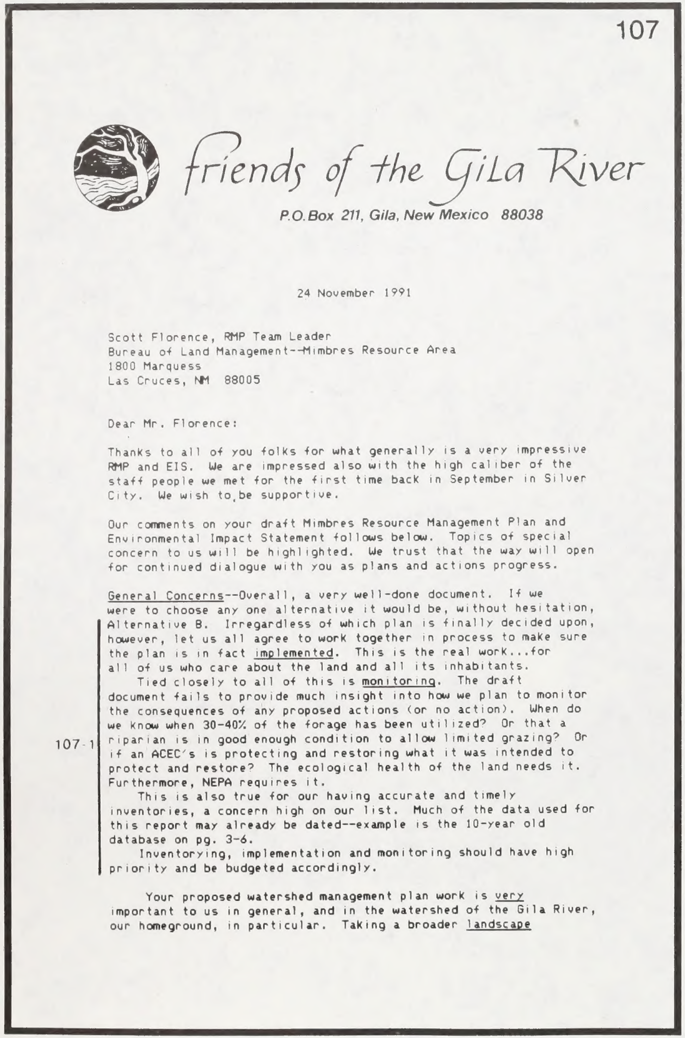
Among other concerns, I do have an area that troubles me greatly. The BLM's almost cavalier attitude insofar as private property is concerned really alarms me. Your maps make absolutely no distinction in land status, which leads one to believe that the BLM intends to manage all lands – whether they are Federal, State, or private. 106-1

Perhaps this can be addressed in the next phase concerning the Mimbres Resource Area.

Sincerely –

Jim Culberson

106-1 The BLM is responsible for managing only the public land. The RMP does not apply to private, State trust, or other Federal lands. With the exception of a few, the maps displayed in the RMP reflect only public land, particularly all those showing various designations. Colored land status maps with more detail are available in the Mimbres Resource Area Office for review.



107

friends of the Gila River

P.O.Box 211, Gila, New Mexico 88038

24 November 1991

Scott Florence, RMP Team Leader
Bureau of Land Management--Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Mr. Florence:

Thanks to all of you folks for what generally is a very impressive RMP and EIS. We are impressed also with the high caliber of the staff people we met for the first time back in September in Silver City. We wish to be supportive.

Our comments on your draft Mimbres Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement follows below. Topics of special concern to us will be highlighted. We trust that the way will open for continued dialogue with you as plans and actions progress.

General Concerns--Overall, a very well-done document. If we were to choose any one alternative it would be, without hesitation, Alternative B. Irregardless of which plan is finally decided upon, however, let us all agree to work together in process to make sure the plan is in fact implemented. This is the real work...for all of us who care about the land and all its inhabitants.

107-1 Tied closely to all of this is monitoring. The draft document fails to provide much insight into how we plan to monitor the consequences of any proposed actions (or no action). When do we know when 30-40% of the forage has been utilized? Or that a riparian is in good enough condition to allow limited grazing? Or if an ACEC's is protecting and restoring what it was intended to protect and restore? The ecological health of the land needs it. Furthermore, NEPA requires it.

This is also true for our having accurate and timely inventories, a concern high on our list. Much of the data used for this report may already be dated--example is the 10-year old database on pg. 3-6.

Inventorying, implementation and monitoring should have high priority and be budgeted accordingly.

Your proposed watershed management plan work is very important to us in general, and in the watershed of the Gila River, our homeground, in particular. Taking a broader landscape

107-1 Monitoring and evaluation are very important parts of the planning process. A monitoring and implementation plan will be developed to closely track the progress and effectiveness of implementing various decisions in the RMP. Recent changes in BLM policy tie the RMP closely to the budget process and give priority to funding RMP decisions, particularly those related to ACECs. As new inventory information is acquired it will be used to maintain and, if needed, amend or revise it.

107

107-2 ecology approach is critical, especially in finding clarity on such issues as Cumulative Effects, secured instream flows, and Species and Areas of Special Concern. Cooperative work among agencies and others is viewed by us as critical for success. We do not see any Memorandums of Understanding and Cooperative Agreements listed for the US Forest Service, the NM Department of Game & Fish, or the US Fish & Wildlife Service (Appendix B). Perhaps we don't understand something here. As regards our concern for the Gila River and its watershed, such understandings and agreements seems very important. Perhaps you are not aware of the Gila River Riparian Management Plan currently being worked on by the USFS-Silver City District, permittees and other concerned publics. Would you and others consider joining in on this process? Or how about setting up a Gila River Watershed conference/workshop or something so everyone can work more effectively together? Only in this larger landscape context do we feel that Cumulative Effects will be adequately addressed.

Recent BLM emphasis on riparian systems is laudatory. Your progessiveness is a model for all of us. As mentioned in this document numerous times, these biologically-important areas must be given high priority. At the same time, however, we should not neglect the uplands and the arroyos. Again, a multi-scale planning process that includes a landscape/watershed plan is very important (use of GIS will be more and more useful as we go). As pointed out in this proposed plan, bringing the ecological condition on all grazing allotments up to satifactory condition should have highest priority. This is clearly evident when we look at Appendix C-1 and find over 1/3 of all allotments are in unsatisifactory ecological range condition. Linking upland health with restored lowlands must always be kept in focus.

Land disposal is another general concern we have. Only with Alternative B are we gaining (186,000 acres), rather than losing (for example, 9000 acres in Alt. D) public lands. As stated on page 4-132, "The cumulative impact of continuing net loss of private land makes it imperative that protection is provided on Federal lands." As noted, this is especially important for special status flora and fauna species and their habitats. We trust this will be keep clearly in mind.

107-3 Specifics on T&E and other species of concern are not very adequately addressed in this document. We assume that they will be on the scale of individual projects (Question: Does BLM do a NEPA document for individual projects like a grazing allotment?) I'm sure you folks are aware that the Ferruginous Hawk (Buteo regalis) is currently being strongly considered for T&E status. All indications are that the FWS will concur and begin a status review. This should be addressed more fully, especially in regard to the possible protection and restoration of grassland habitats and prey bases (re-introduction of the once-numerous black-tailed prairie dog to the region would be of benefit to a whole host of species, including the Aplomado Falcon that once occurred here). Other species of concern that could be elaborated on more fully are several species of bats, including the Spotted Bat.

Other wildlife concerns are the protection of playa habitats for a large number of species including T&E species like migrant Snowy Plover and White-faced Ibis.

Another is possible effects of chemical brush control

107-2 Cooperative work among agencies is important for the management of our natural resources. At this time, the BLM does not have a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Forest Service concerning the management of the Gila River watershed. We were not aware of the Gila River Riparian Management Plan which is presently being developed. We would welcome the opportunity to work with all interested parties in the management of the Gila River watershed. There may be an opportunity to include BLM's portion of the Middle Box with the Forest Service planning effort.

107-3 NEPA requires an environmental assessment for all activities which may impact public land resources. These activities include Allotment Management Planning, Habitat Management Planning, mineral and recreational activities, and individual projects. BLM normally prepares a site-specific environmental analysis for these types of activities. We are aware of the current status of the ferruginous hawk. This species was included in Appendix L and in our Section 7 Biological Assessment. All T&E species were addressed in the Biological Assessment which has been reviewed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

107

107-4 treatment on individual species, ecosystems and ecological processes. We cannot find in this document any disclosure (as required by law) on the adverse effects of this activity. What, for example, would this have on the herpetological and small mammal faunas near a place like Antelope Pass? Will certain species, such as the Colorado River Toad--a mesquite, creosotebush-loving species--be affected? Also, what is the cost and who pays for treating (chemical and otherwise) the over 67,000 acres mentioned in the proposed plan? Again, Alt. B seems to make the most sense to us. Realistically, can this be implemented, and should it? Fire is one thing, chemicals something else again. We don't like it.

More specific concerns center around the ACECs. You (and TNC) did good. The process of developing management prescription for each of these must be considered closely. Make sure the public is involved all along. This is very unclear in the document. We need to get specific.

Bear Creek ACEC--excellent idea. Go for it. Protect for the riparian community. We have no problem with limited or no public access.

Guadalupe Canyon--Another very good one. So too the Peloncillo ACEC.

Apache Box--Make it a wilderness; Close to all grazing and mining.

San Simon Cienega--Continue dialogue with Arizona folks. This historic area should not be rejected as a ACEC. Like most of the southwests wetland and riparian areas, the loss of this once spectacular cienega is a true tragedy.

Gila River Middle Box and Lower Box--you folks are right on the mark and trend-setters with this. We're with you all the way. Wild & Scenic status?...we're not sure yet. Perhaps we can do a good job without it. As mentioned already, we strongly encourage you to coordinate with others (especially USFS and NMG&F) and let's get the Gila River--all of it--protected and restored. Emphasize watershed and wildlife. Not recreation. Certainly not ORVs. This can be done in the true spirit of cooperation, without war.

Must get to the P.O. to get this postmarked. Please put us on your mailing list so we can stay in touch.

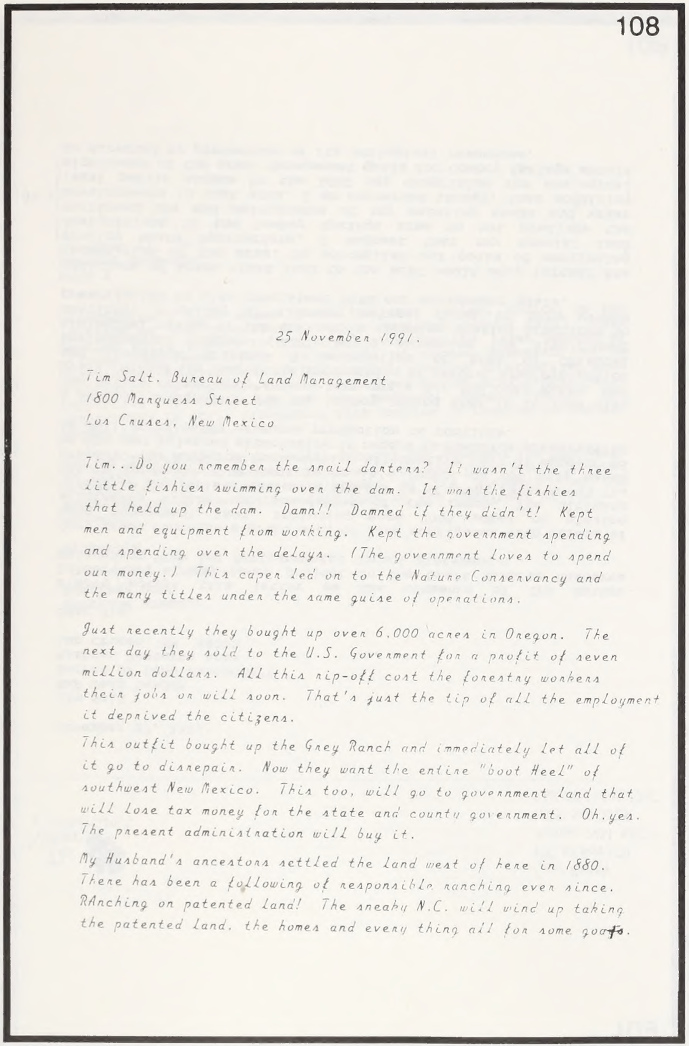
Thanks for all your hard work. Know you are appreciated.

Sincerely,

Stephen O. MacDonald

Stephen O. MacDonald
for The Friends of the Gila River

107-4 The general effects of brush control have been thoroughly analyzed in the "Environmental Impact Statement for Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands." The potential impacts resulting from individual brush control projects would be considered in site-specific environmental assessments. If there are any special status species that would be adversely affected, the area would not be treated. While the Colorado River toad has been found in vegetation associations which include creosotebush, mesquite, other shrubs, and forbs and grasses, its most critical habitat need is water for breeding. Areas which experience rapid runoff with high erosion can be detrimental to this species. Also, riparian and arroyo habitats are avoided in all brush control projects. Brush control and other practices to improve watershed conditions may benefit this species. The average cost of a brush control project is approximately $14.00 per acre, and funding is provided by BLM grazing fees and contributions from permittees.



108

25 November 1991.

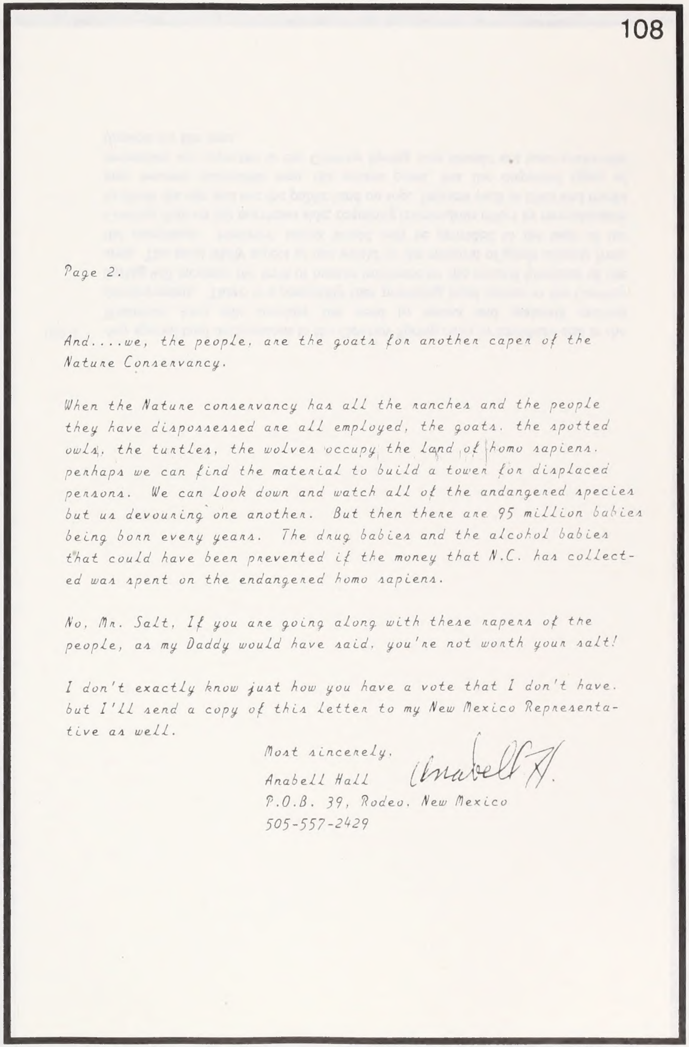
Tim Salt. Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Los Cruses, New Mexico

Tim...Do you remember the snail darters? It wasn't the three little fishies swimming over the dam. It was the fishies that held up the dam. Damn!! Damned if they didn't! Kept men and equipment from working. Kept the government spending and spending over the delays. (The government loves to spend our money.) This caper led on to the Nature Conservancy and the many titles under the same guise of operations.

Just recently they bought up over 6.000 acres in Oregon. The next day they sold to the U.S. Goverment for a profit of seven million dollars. All this rip-off cost the forestry workers their jobs or will soon. That's just the tip of all the employment it deprived the citizens.

This outfit bought up the Grey Ranch and immediately let all of it go to disrepair. Now they want the entire "boot Heel" of southwest New Mexico. This too, will go to government land that will lose tax money for the state and county government. Oh.yes. The present administration will buy it.

My Husband's ancestors settled the land west of here in 1880. There has been a following of responsible ranching ever since. RAnching on patented land! The sneaky N.C. will wind up taking the patented land. the homes and every thing all for some goats.



108

Page 2.

And....we, the people, are the goats for another caper of the Nature Conservancy.

When the Nature conservancy has all the ranches and the people they have dispossessed are all employed, the goats. the spotted owls, the turtles, the wolves occupy the land of homo sapiens. perhaps we can find the material to build a tower for displaced persons. We can look down and watch all of the andangered species but us devouring one another. But then there are 95 million babies being born every years. The drug babies and the alcohol babies that could have been prevented if the money that N.C. has collected was spent on the endangered homo sapiens.

No, Mr. Salt, If you are going along with these rapers of the people, as my Daddy would have said, you're not worth your salt!

I don't exactly know just how you have a vote that I don't have. but I'll send a copy of this letter to my New Mexico Representative as well.

Most sincerely.

Anabell H.

Anabell Hall
P.O.B. 39, Rodeo. New Mexico
505-557-2429

109

The Nature Conservancy

Gray Ranch
HC 65 Box 179
Animas, NM 88020
(505) 548-2225
FAX (505) 548-2267

November 23, 1991

Tim Salt
RMP Team Leader
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Tim,

Please accept this letter as the comments of The Nature Conservancy's Gray Ranch project on the Draft Mimbres Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

Gray Ranch contains a great deal of land contiguous with Bureau of Land Management land, including some 7000 acres of grazing allotments within the boundaries of the ranch. The ultimate direction and implementation of the RMP is of great interest to The Nature Conservancy in regards to it's impact on the Gray Ranch project. The Resource Conservation Alternative (Alt D) appears to be the most balanced alternative in regard to resource preservation as well as allowing resource production to continue.

A special designation for the Cowboy Spring area is in line with The Nature Conservancy's long-term goals for the Gray Ranch. Our goals include the compatible interaction of natural area protection and livestock grazing. A designation of Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) would recognize the significant biological values of the area while allowing grazing practices to continue. A policy of allowing natural fires to burn within prescription is also consistent with our management goals.

109-1 Additions of state trust land to the ACEC would only further the recognition of the area. To accomplish our goals of continuing grazing where appropriate, I suggest that any special land designations in the Cowboy Springs area do not preclude the continued use and maintenance of any existing roads and water developments in that area. I am concerned though, that acquiring legal public access to the ACEC may comprimise the ecological signicance of the area. Management goals for Cowboy Springs should be directed by protection of its ecological resources.

109-1 Any special land designations in the Cowboy Spring Area or anywhere else in the Resource Area will consider the need to access and maintain existing developments. There is a possibility that providing legal access to the Cowboy Spring will increase the level of human influence on the natural functions of the area. The most likely aspect of this would be the removal of game animals from the ecosystem. However, access would only be provided to the base of the Cowboy Rim on the northeast side, requiring tremendous effort by recreationists to climb the rim and use the public land on top. Impacts such as litter and tracks may become noticeable near the access point, but the dispersed types of recreation use expected in the Cowboy Spring area should not have noticeable impacts on the area.

109

November 23, 1991
RMP/EIS comments
Page 2

Alternative D also seems to be the most logical choice in the location of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. This routing would result in the trail crossing the least amount of private land and lessen the number of access easements to be negotiated. However, any of the possible routing alternatives have a potential to increase demand for access on the Gray Ranch. While supportive of the idea of the National Scenic Trail, the Conservancy is still proceeding with caution in regards to public access to the ranch.

The RMP/EIS appears to be a well thought out document for the scope in which it was intended. I commend you and your staff on your efforts so far on the development of the document and its presentation to the public. Good luck on the remainder of the process.

Sincerely,

Geoffrey Babb

Geoffrey Babb
Preserve Manager

110

Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club
440 Cerrillos Rd., Suite G, Santa Fe, NM 87501

23 November 1991

RMP Team Leader
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Dear RMP Team:

The Draft RMP-EIS is a praiseworthy planning effort. A great deal of relevant information is carefully organized, and the prose is clear. You set many laudable goals, including those for land acquisition, access to public lands, limitations on off-road travel, designation of new wilderness inventory units, wild rivers, and other special management areas, and future plans for wildlife habitat and for grazing allotments, with special attention to fragile lands. As usual your plans are overly optimistic--more work is scheduled than is likely to be funded--but perhaps this is desirable: we, the public, will at least have a blueprint for seeking better budgets for your needs.

As usual, too, this RMP Draft is tradition-bound: minerals and livestock remain paramount; "beef demand will grow" (p. 2-21). In your preferred alternative, all of 200 acres (6/1000 of 1 percent of the land) are proposed to be added to the 7826 acres (26/100 of 1 percent) of public lands from which livestock are excluded. If native wildlife eat forage that could be eaten by cows, then sic ADC on 'em (p. 4-6)! Surely a rational look at the Resource Area by an ecologist or by an Eastern stockman or by a tired Hereford looking for the next grass plant would find that large parts of this desert grassland should not be grazed by livestock. We think that you, like most of the Bureau, have failed to absorb the requirement of FLPMA: multiple-use management requires the best mix of uses, including no active use, to protect ecological and resource values.

What is needed to change your "good-of-the-traditional-sort" proposal into a true multiple-use plan is serious, GIS-aided consideration of the mix of uses for all land units, without preconceptions, leading to innovative solutions. For instance, you should re-think how to use range betterment funds to improve the range, not to preserve or to increase livestock use. Or how Animal Damage Control should be fitted to wildlife goals. Or which roads to close, and how to keep vehicles on roads. And, especially, which areas should not be grazed. Take a look at current BLM planning for the Rio Puerco watershed, where soil protection takes precedence over livestock.

In almost all instances we prefer Alternative B over other alternatives. In some instances we support a greater emphasis even than Alternative B's on public values, as opposed to special interests.

110

RMP Team, p. 2

110-1 Mineral-entry exclosures, where needed to protect surface resources, are of great importance. We advocate exclusion of all surface entry in the 30 ACEC's of Alternative B. Excluded areas would still be a small percentage of the public lands. It is inconsistent, we think, to identify a high-value area like Granite Gap ACEC and then to allow it to be destroyed or appropriated to private use under the mining laws.

110-2 One of the most important decisions in the document is selection of use-factors for vegetation (for instance pp. 2-46, -57, and -70). We believe that Holochek et al. in their 1989 range management text, and even more clearly Holochek 1991 (Rangelands 13: 115-120), are right in identifying use-factors as the critical determinant in grazing management, and we find no basis for disputing Holochek's finding that on black grama range, use higher than 30% of forage causes deterioration of the range. If you have a basis for disagreement, it should be presented. If not, it is irresponsible of you to propose 40% use of black grama and even higher factors for other species.

Holochek bases his emphasis on stocking level on two measures, condition of vegetation and condition of animals. If a third measure, species diversity, is added, we think that (without belittling stocking level) the question of grazing systems becomes important: the cow that has all year to pick and choose will eliminate her favorite foods. Therefore we appreciate the encouragement that you give to grazing systems (for instance pp. 2-21, 3-6). You should require that significant seasonal rest periods be included in management of all grazed lands.

110-3 To declare the present vegetation as the desired plant community (p. 4-53) would be defeatist for shrub-invaded grasslands. Even without herbicides, more can and should be done than you suggest with fire and grazing management, commonly by removing livestock for one or more seasons to build fuel loads. The plant community will shift toward the original condition, which should be the desired plant community. Until harmless, narrow-spectrum herbicides are found, we support Alternative B's avoidance of chemicals. (This differs somewhat from our usual Chapter position on vegetative treatment because many of our members in the Mimbres Resource Area strongly oppose herbicides. A majority of them might favor one type of use: herbicides applied to individual salt cedars for riparian repair.)

The annual agreement with Animal Damage Control is an important decision governed by the Resource Management Plan, just like decisions on grazing, minerals, and other activities, and you are required to present the governing principles of your ADC decisions just as for the others. It is not enough to say that "ADC actions are usually a benefit to livestock" and to suggest that native herbivores as well as predators should be killed for the sake of livestock (p. 4-6). At what cost in tax monies spent and non-target wildlife killed does ADC "benefit livestock"? And why should the federal government be providing this additional subsidy to livestock operators? ADC must kill at least 8 or 10 coyotes to lower the average coyote population by one animal (because of increased birth rates and higher survival rates). And then, because the population is one animal lower, more jackrabbits and rodents eat more forage, leaving less for larger herbivores including livestock. This

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110-1 Withdrawal from locatable mineral entry was considered where mineral potential is high and the potential for resource conflict highest. In this case, locatable mineral potential is low to moderate. Under the Proposed Plan, the Granite Gap ACEC would require a Plan of Operations (POO) for any locatable mineral exploration or development activity. We feel that adequate environmental protection will be provided through the process of developing and approving a POO.

110-2 See responses to Comments 20-5 and 56B-1.

110-3 In most cases, shrub-dominated areas would remain as they are even after total removal of livestock. The established shrub cover uses most of the available water and nutrients so the establishment of other perennial species is not possible. Annual species will fluctuate depending on the annual fluctuations in rainfall. Unless the shrubs are removed from the present plant community to free the available water and nutrients, the present community will remain and under this Alternative (B), become the Desired Plant Community.

110

RMF Team, p. 3

110-4 is senseless, as has been pointed out by several independent studies beginning with the Leopold report thirty years ago. Please consider your ADC policy and present it for public examination. If you want to continue to allow the Department of Agriculture to spend our money killing our wildlife, you must tell us why.

110-5 A major deficiency in the document is lack of information on individual grazing allotments. Listing them (Appendix C) and referring to out-dated documents (pp. 2-17, 4-5) is not enough: this document will govern grazing actions for a decade or more. It should include acreage (federal, state, private), range condition and trend, preference, grazing capacity, and current utilization for each allotment, with the date (or projected date) of its AMP or other plan, along with notes on riparian conditions and any special problems such as conflicts with other uses and trespass history. If some of these data are lacking, you should state when you'll have them. Without this information the public cannot judge the job that you are doing on our land, nor help you do it.

In general we praise Alternative B's selection of special management areas. We also praise most of the planned actions in ACEC's, especially obtaining public access and blocking up areas by land acquisition. We do not in general accept livestock grazing in biological ACEC's because it conflicts with management goals; and we maintain that all forms of mineral entry including fluid leasing should be excluded. Certain additional special management areas are needed, such as the Pyramid Mountains and proposals in the Southern Rio Grande Grazing EIS. But if Alternative B's list of areas is approved, we can wait for a later amendment (probably after wilderness decisions are made) to urge additional areas. Particular notes on special management areas:

Aden Lava Flow--At least the RNA part should be fenced, as originally planned, for the sake of stated management goals.

110-6 Alamo Hueco Mountains--Though admitting the desirability of your goal, we oppose the method proposed--chemical brush control--to modify vegetation. See our comments above on desired communities.

Antelppe Pass--(Same as under Alamo Huecos.)

Bear Creek--We would like to see the area enlarged and designated as a research natural area.

Big Hatchet Mountains--Alternative B's boundaries are important. See also comment above under Alamo Huecos.

Cedar Mountains--Alternative B's plan should be adopted.

Cooke's Range--(Same as under Alamo Huecos.)

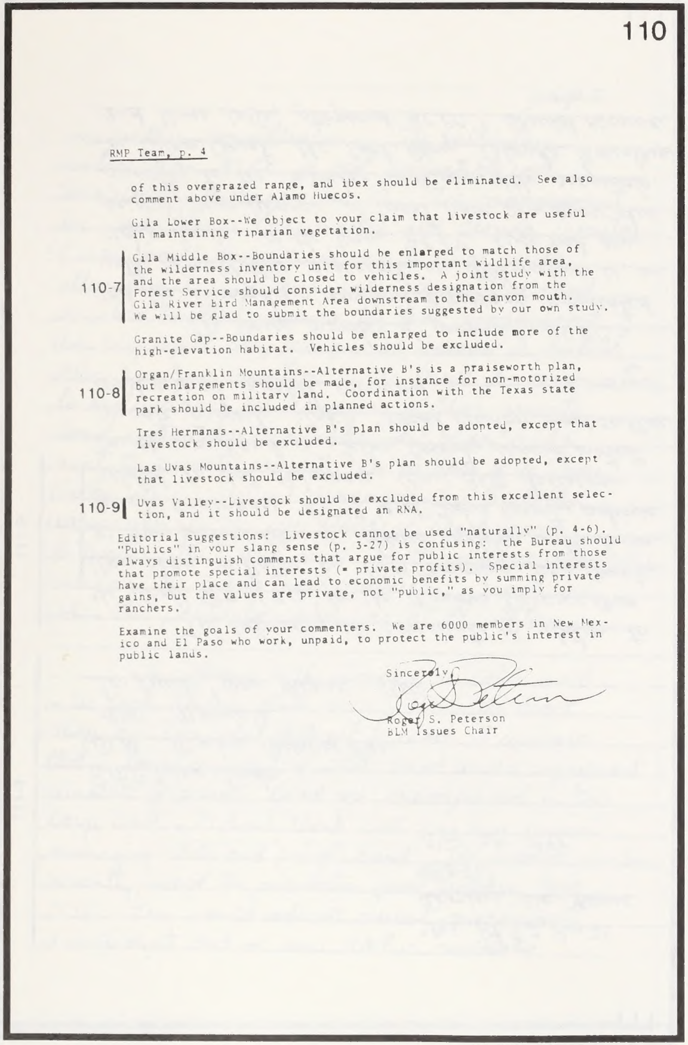
Doña Ana Mountains--Your plans contradict themselves. We agree with "exclude exotic animals" and reject "maintain current livestock."

Florida Mountains--Livestock should be excluded from a large part

110-4 Information concerning Animal Damage Control (ADC) activities is available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) offices and local BLM offices. APHIS prepares an annual plan of operations and submits, to our office, this plan as well as previous year's control activities and results by county and allotment. This plan and past year's results and activities are reviewed prior to approval of any ADC activity on public land. The BLM has strict guidelines (Manual 6830-ADC) concerning ADC activities and methods on public land, including the preparation of Environmental Assessments (EAs) for ADC activities. BLM Las Cruces is currently preparing an EA for the next year's plan which will be distributed for public comment. We also are planning public meetings on this issue.

110-5 All of the information on individual allotments is contained in the Southern Rio Grande Grazing Environmental Impact Statement (May 1981) and the Las Cruces/Lordsburg Management Framework Plan Amendment/Environmental Impact Statement (March 1983). Allotment acreages and preference do not change unless studies are being conducted or an allotment is combined or split. A Rangeland Program Summary is published each year describing which allotments are being studied, where riparian work is being done, where rangeland improvements have been constructed and are proposed, the number of new Allotment Management Plans and Allotment Agreements written, changes in allotment category, and changes in rangeland condition and trend and preference numbers. The rangeland program summary is available upon request from the Mimbres Resource Area Office.

110-6 See responses to Comments 29-4 and 29-5.



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RMP Team, p. 4

of this overgrazed range, and ibex should be eliminated. See also comment above under Alamo Huecos.

Gila Lower Box--We object to your claim that livestock are useful in maintaining riparian vegetation.

110-7 Gila Middle Box--Boundaries should be enlarged to match those of the wilderness inventory unit for this important wildlife area, and the area should be closed to vehicles. A joint study with the Forest Service should consider wilderness designation from the Gila River Bird Management Area downstream to the canyon mouth. We will be glad to submit the boundaries suggested by our own study.

Granite Gap--Boundaries should be enlarged to include more of the high-elevation habitat. Vehicles should be excluded.

110-8 Organ/Franklin Mountains--Alternative B's is a praiseworth plan, but enlargements should be made, for instance for non-motorized recreation on military land. Coordination with the Texas state park should be included in planned actions.

Tres Hermanas--Alternative B's plan should be adopted, except that livestock should be excluded.

Las Uvas Mountains--Alternative B's plan should be adopted, except that livestock should be excluded.

110-9 Uvas Valley--Livestock should be excluded from this excellent selection, and it should be designated an RNA.

Editorial suggestions: Livestock cannot be used "naturally" (p. 4-6). "Publics" in your slang sense (p. 3-27) is confusing: the Bureau should always distinguish comments that argue for public interests from those that promote special interests (= private profits). Special interests have their place and can lead to economic benefits by summing private gains, but the values are private, not "public," as you imply for ranchers.

Examine the goals of your commenters. We are 6000 members in New Mexico and El Paso who work, unpaid, to protect the public's interest in public lands.

Sincerely,

Roger S. Peterson

Roger S. Peterson
BLM Issues Chair

110-7 This planning effort addresses management alternatives for the public land administered by the BLM. The majority of the land in the Middle Box is on the Gila National Forest, including the majority of the wilderness area proposed by the New Mexico Wilderness Coalition. Public land administered by the BLM in the Gila Lower Box area was inventoried for wilderness potential in the late 1970's and early 1980's. The Middle Box was included in the Redrock initial inventory unit, and was dropped when the intensive inventory showed that a road in House Canyon made the Middle Box portion of the unit smaller than 5,000 acres. It is not within the scope of this document to revisit existing wilderness recommendations and decisions.

110-8 This plan addresses only the management of public land administered by the BLM. Management of Military withdrawal lands will be planned and conducted by the appropriate Defense Department agency. Coordination with the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife has been included throughout this planning effort and the development of the Organ Mountains Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP) to ensure that our mutual management goals and methods are complementary along the New Mexico/Texas State Line.

110-9 This area has flourished under the careful stewardship of the grazing permittee. The black grama grassland community can best be maintained in its present condition by continuing current grazing practices.

111

Star Rt. *2, Box 26
Deming, New Mexico
88030
Nov. 24, 1991

RMP Team Leader
BLM, Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

The following are comments in relation to the Draft RMP/EIS for the Mimbres Resource Area. 111-1 Any plan initiated by BLM covering Luna County or any portion there of, should conform with Luna County Ordinance No. 17 and Luna County policies related to that ordinance. Any BLM decisions involving lands in Luna County should protect private property rights, local custom and culture and a free market economy.

The large number of proposed ACEC's and the tremendous amount of acreage associated with some of these, especially in Alternative D, is ridiculous. If the term ACEC ever had any special significance it won't have any more due mostly to the number and size of the proposals. In Luna County the "Cooks Range", "Florida Mountains and Uvas Valley" proposed ACEC's should receive

111-1 See response to Comment 20-3.

111

page 2

no further consideration. The restrictive nature of an ACEC is not compatible with Luna County Ordinance no. 12. The management for "Cooks Range" (23160 acres) and Florida Mountains (22360 acres) appear to be very similiar under alternative D. If such large acreages of land, so close together require the same management then they arent very unique or special in nature. Also I see no mention in the Draft for compensation to individuals for lowering of their private land values due to establishment of an ACEC

111-2 next to private property. In the case of the Uvas Valley ACEC, current management is probably responsible for the pure stands of "black grama" to begin with, and since most ranchers commonly manage for grama grass production, I can't see where this particular area has ACEC status.

111-3 In reference to the proposed wildlife HMP in the Cooks Range / Nutt area; While the draft maps are somewhat difficult to read, it appears that a large amount of State land and a significant amount of private land are encompassed in this large unit. I dont think BLM has any business managing state and private land. The wildlife numbers currently exceed the population goals listed in table 2-28. This would indicate current management is sufficient and no new HMP is necessary.

111-2 See response to Hearing Comment LC2-2.

111-3 BLM does not manage State trust or private lands. The areas designated as proposed HMPs show the general areas where HMP development may take place. This HMP development could include private and State trust lands under agreement with the appropriate landowners and State agencies. BLM's Supplemental Program Guidance requires that RMPs address wildlife population goals. A determination will be made during HMP development as to the actual wildlife population numbers which the habitat can support.

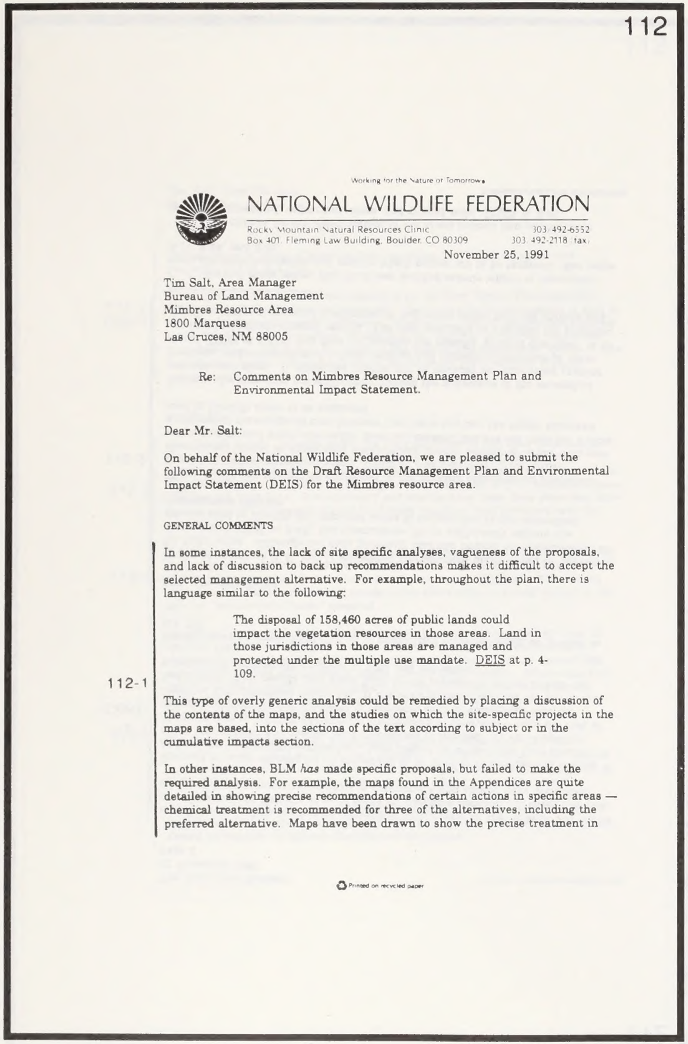
111

page 3

The Butterfield trail itself can be enjoyed and used just as it exists today. I've seen individuals and groups walking along the trail and see no reason for any special management that surely could become restrictive.

I prefer alternative A. I believe current management and uses of the public land are superior to those possibilities presented in alternatives B-C and D. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely
Joe Bill Nunn



112

Working for the Nature of Tomorrow.

NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION

Rocky Mountain Natural Resources Clinic 303 492-6552
Box 401 Fleming Law Building, Boulder, CO 80309 303 492-2118 (fax)

November 25, 1991

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Re: Comments on Mimbres Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

Dear Mr. Salt:

On behalf of the National Wildlife Federation, we are pleased to submit the following comments on the Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Mimbres resource area.

GENERAL COMMENTS

112-1 In some instances, the lack of site specific analyses, vagueness of the proposals, and lack of discussion to back up recommendations makes it difficult to accept the selected management alternative. For example, throughout the plan, there is language similar to the following:

> The disposal of 158,460 acres of public lands could impact the vegetation resources in those areas. Land in those jurisdictions in those areas are managed and protected under the multiple use mandate. DEIS at p. 4-109.

This type of overly generic analysis could be remedied by placing a discussion of the contents of the maps, and the studies on which the site-specific projects in the maps are based, into the sections of the text according to subject or in the cumulative impacts section.

In other instances, BLM *has* made specific proposals, but failed to make the required analysis. For example, the maps found in the Appendices are quite detailed in showing precise recommendations of certain actions in specific areas — chemical treatment is recommended for three of the alternatives, including the preferred alternative. Maps have been drawn to show the precise treatment in

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112-1 The Mimbres RMP/EIS contains a general, broad level of planning and environmental analysis. Site-specific analyses will be conducted later when specific areas are known and before any projects are implemented to evaluate impacts on the local resources. This concept is known as tiering and is provided for under the CEQ regulations for implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1508.28).

The maps in the RMP/EIS depict general, estimated project locations. The exact locations of proposed projects will be determined later during activity planning, project planning, and site-specific environmental assessment (EA). The land treatment areas shown are potential areas; future site-specific analyses would determine the exact areas within those boundaries that would be treated. Individual treatment plans and EAs would be prepared for specific areas prior to treatment. The general impacts of land treatments are thoroughly discussed in the Las Cruces/Lordsburg MFPA/EIS (USDI 1984) and the EIS for Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States (USDI 1991).

The direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts anticipated from continuing management guidance and from implementation of each alternative are discussed in Chapter 4. The cumulative impacts are integrated with the direct and indirect impact narratives and are then summarized on Final pages 4-52 and 4-53 (Draft pages 4-131 and 4-132). Both direct and indirect impacts, when taken in total, can become cumulative impacts. Only those resource values that were identified as having the potential of being significantly affected by cumulative impacts have been analyzed.

112

Tim Salt, Area Manager
25 November 1991
Page 2

112-1 (Con't) specific areas.[1] Yet, there is no corresponding analysis for the BLM or the reader to understand the impacts so as to make an adequate decision. In cases like this, site-specific environmental analysis is appropriate and should have been done.

It would be more efficient for all concerned to do the key environmental studies and analyses when alternatives have been firmed up to the point that specific areas are targeted and specific land treatments prescribed. To make specific decisions now — without site-specific environmental analysis — runs the risk of making irretrievable commitments of resources without complying with the National Environmental Policy Act. If the environmental studies are left to the last minute, their results may place BLM in the position of having to redo the planning (at considerable expense in time and resources).

Finally, more in-depth discussion as to cumulative impacts should be present in the EIS.

SOIL, AIR, AND WATER

Under alternatives B, C, and D watershed management plans would be developed for eight areas. Although the plan generally lists the criteria for identification of these areas[2] (DEIS at 2-46), the alternatives fail to sufficiently explain the criteria used to identify the impaired areas to be included in the watershed management program.

112-2 There is only one alternative suggested to the existing management practices applied to critical watershed areas. DEIS at 2-46,2-57,2-67, 2-70. Other alternatives should be considered which would protect additional areas with poor water quality and which also suffer from soil erosion, but are not included within a watershed management area because they have not met the single standard used to identify areas to be managed.

Further, the plan does not sufficiently discuss the substance of the watershed management plans. It states the results will be realized by "improving grazing practices, restricting off-road vehicle, mining and recreation activities in these areas" (DEIS at 4-112), but does not propose the specific "grazing practices" to be employed to achieve desired results. The plan also fails to evaluate the potential significant impact chemical treatments of vegetation might have on surface and

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[1] Several maps reflect that BLM has decided exactly where to chemically treat and burn vegetation and exactly which plants are to be targeted. See maps 2-17, 2-24, and 2-30.

[2] The criteria for the identification of the areas include non-point source impaired watershed, vegetation, slope, and critical soils. DEIS, p. 2-46.

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112-2 For this level of planning, the criteria listed for identification of watershed planning areas is sufficient. Greater detail will be addressed in the development of individual activity plans. Additional areas where watershed management planning may occur can be found on Map 2-14. Specific management practices will be identified when planning occurs for specific areas.

112

Tim Salt, Area Manager
25 November 1991

112-2 (Con't) ground water in areas of watershed management and in the resource area generally. DEIS at 4-114.

Five stream segments have been identified by the New Mexico Environmental Improvement Division as being impaired. The source of the impairment is said to be a result of "specialty crop production, rangelands, animal holding/management areas, dredging, flow regulation, channelization, removal of riparian vegetation and recreation." DEIS at 3-10. None of the alternatives specifically speaks to how and to what degree the proposed action will improve the conditions of these critical areas.

VEGETATION

112-3 (a). *Fragile Lands*. In some cases, the plan alternatives rest their decisions on dated material. Acreage of fragile lands existing in the resource area was determined by inventories conducted in 1978-1981. At that time there was a total of 1,600,000 acres of land where the vegetation was in fair or poor range condition. DEIS at 3-8, map 2-18. It is unclear if any studies have been done since that time to determine if the amount of land in "fragile" condition has increased over the past 10-12 years.

112-4 (b). *Sale areas*. Plan alternatives B, C, and D all plan to develop new vegetation (native plants) sale areas, though it is admitted that the sale would have a minimal, but negative effect on the vegetative resource. DEIS at 4-110. Given that plan B is the environmental preservation alternative, it should include a "no sale" or "no increase of sales" proposal.

112-5 (c). *Land Treatments*. Although chemical treatments are suggested in three of the four alternatives, (DEIS at S-5), no information is provided on how such chemical treatments might affect water sources and their ability to support fish and wildlife, or how the treatment might directly affect wildlife. When map 2-26 (ACECs under alternative D) is placed over map 2-30 (chemical brush control under alternative D), it appears some ACECs, like Cooke's Range and Franklin/Organ Mountains, will be subjected to some chemical treatment.

The Cooke ACEC description acknowledges there are state listed and state-sensitive plants, (DEIS at H-19), then suggests "Consider chemical brush control in some portions where necessary to meet desired plant community objectives" at H-20. Unfortunately there is no discussion of a goal to protect the plants.

Given the map indicates chemical treatment will occur, it appears the recommendation is specific enough that some site-specific environmental analysis should be required to indicate the effect on the plants.

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112-3 The inventories used to develop the fragile lands information and map are is the most comprehensive and complete data available in the Resource Area. Additional data by allotment has been collected but it is incomplete for the whole Resource Area. The fragile lands identified in the plan are areas with highly erodible soils and vegetation types in poor or fair range condition (see page 3-8 in this document).

112-4 The sale areas are small (<50 acres) and are usually on lands that have been identified for disposal. The Bureau feels it is better to offer plants legally for sale at minimum cost for landscaping purposes in the hope that it will discourage theft of native plants.

112-5 A site-specific environmental assessment (including on-the-ground surveys if necessary) is prepared for all actions taking place on public lands. If there are special status plant species which would be adversely affected by chemical brush control, the area would not be treated. Refer to page 3-20 of this document for the BLM's policy on the protection of Federal and State-listed plants. In the case of the Cooke's Range ACEC, the special status plant species occur in the mountains. The pre-treatment conditions necessary for a chemical brush control are permeable soils, remnant perennial grass species which will respond to the chemical, and terrain of less than 10 percent slope. Also see responses to Comments 29-4 and 29-5.

Tim Salt, Area Manager
25 November 1991
Page 4

112-5 (Con't) On H-44, the Organ/Franklin Mountains description observes there are "rare and endemic plants" and "federal or state endangered species." The management goals do not mention chemical treatment (see H-44), but the map shows they are planned. This inconsistency should be addressed and environmental analysis and planning done.

These are two instances where spraying on ACECs overlaps areas where there are rare, threatened, and endangered species. The proposals are specific enough that environmental analysis and planning should be done to support the decision.

Prescribed burning is proposed under each alternative as a land treatment to improve vegetation (DEIS at 2-24, 2-46, 2-59, 2-60, 2-70). Some information should be provided concerning its potential impact on air quality. Consideration should also be given to the experience of other resource areas where burning had the initial effect of improving the available forage but later resulted in degraded conditions as a result of overgrazing on the burned areas. The Bureau of Land Management in the Salmon district in Idaho recently noted in an allotment evaluation, that "Instead of improving the range resource, the burns may have become liabilities in the sense of promoting high animal concentrations and ultimately plant degradation."[3]

112-6 (d). *Livestock grazing*. The 8,026 acres alternative D would remove from grazing is hardly a compromise between alternative B's elimination of 201,470 acres (in order to provide maximum protection for bighorn sheep habitat, riparian areas, critical soils, fragile lands and other sensitive resources — DEIS at 2-48) and alternative C's elimination of 6,546 acres. DEIS at 2-60. In order to sufficiently protect natural resources, more acres must be eliminated than currently proposed in alternative D. The Bureau should strike a better balance between the competing interests of environmental preservation and development/rancher interests.

Additionally, the alternatives should specify the locations of the contemplated reductions, how soon the reductions in grazing will occur, and for what period they will remain in place.

LAND DISPOSAL

Under plan D, the preferred alternative, the lands identified for sale are significantly greater (158,460 acres) than in alternative A (77,145 acres), the continuing management alternative. DEIS at S-1. The plan states that lands sold

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[3] San Felipe Allotment: Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation; Challis resource area at 56 (September 1991).

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112-6 Consistent with the goals of the Proposed Plan, we do not believe that it is necessary to eliminate livestock grazing over large areas. The Proposed Plan places emphasis on more intensive management of grazing within ACECs and other special management areas, rather than total exclusion. Livestock grazing on public land is not at issue in this RMP as this subject was thoroughly discussed and analyzed in the two grazing EISs which were prepared in the 1980s.

The location of reductions is described in each alternative under the Vegetation Management Concern. Reductions would be implemented after approval of the RMP, consistent with BLM policy.

112

and exchanged are usually identified for city expansion leading to subsequent development, probably resulting in soil disturbance and impaired air quality.

112-7 Additionally, the plan notes the rare or unusual plant communities that will be gained by the lands purchased, but fails to evaluate the loss of any such species resulting from the proposed sales. DEIS at 4-109, 4-111, 4-115. The plan should provide site-specific analysis of the species of vegetation and wildlife which will be lost or affected by the loss of specific areas sold or exchanged.

112-8 Overall there will be a loss of 10,000 acres which translates into a loss of 31,890 AUs. DEIS at S-8. Unless livestock numbers are reduced to account for the forage loss resulting from the sale of the lands, the adjacent lands may suffer from overgrazing.

112-9 Map 2-26 (ACECs), when placed underneath Map 2-25 (land ownership adjustments under alternative d) shows a slight overlap between the Organ/Franklin Mtn. ACECs and the lands to be disposed of. In fact, the conflict extends side-by side for the whole length of the land area to be disposed. This is a concern both because some of the ACEC will be lost and because of potential damage to the threatened and endangered species that will be affected by the close proximity to land that would soon be out of public management. The effects of both should be discussed more fully. The same potential problems also exist for other ACECs adjacent to land disposal areas.

RIPARIAN AND ARROYO AREAS

Under alternative B grazing would be excluded from significant riparian areas. Under this alternative, erosion, stream bank, and arroyo habitat disturbance would not occur as a result of overgrazing. DEIS at 4-68. The plan explains this is important because:

> Riparian areas are unique and among the most productive and important ecosystems. Characteristically, riparian areas display a greater diversity of plants and wildlife than adjoining ecosystems. Healthy systems filter and purify water as it moves through the riparian zone, reduce sediment loads and enhance soil stability, and base flows. DEIS at 3-20.

112-10 The preferred alternative eliminates grazing from "significant" riparian areas such as the Gila Lower Box and Bear Creek. However, because of the admitted beneficial impacts of a healthy riparian area, each alternative should consider greater reductions in livestock grazing in riparian areas in fair or poor condition. Fencing of these precious areas should be considered to improve both vegetation

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112-7 A site-specific EA would consider any potential impacts of individual sales or exchanges.

112-8 When lands are transferred or exchanged out of public ownership and if the lands are allocated for livestock grazing, the AUMs attached to these lands are subtracted from the carrying capacity for that allotment.

112-9 No land would be disposed within the ACEC. Also, see response to Comment 46-1.

112-10 Continuing Management Guidance (page 2-36) addresses riparian area management. This guidance states: "Grazing management practices will be designed and established to meet riparian and water quality needs . . ." and "In those instances where management systems cannot meet objectives, provisions for fencing or other means of exclusion will be utilized."

112

Tim Salt, Area Manager
25 November 1991
Page 6

and water quality.

Most of the special status species live in the riparian and arroyo areas. DEIS at 4-124. Also, the plan admits:

> Riparian and arroyo habitats are fragile areas which attract livestock especially when water is present. The livestock cause more damage from tramping than grazing because the areas are usually small. DEIS at 4-6.

112-11 Yet the preferred and other alternatives plan to burn and chemically treat these areas. It would seem this would kill special status species. Also, chemical contamination would affect water quality.

RIGHT-OF-WAYS

Most of the alternatives for ACECs recommend excluding authorization for ROWs. Given the level of disturbance caused to fragile areas by ROWs, this recommendation should be extended to all ACECs.

112-12 The preferred alternative does not address protection of special status plants and should be reworked so that it explains whether there would be an inventory for threatened or endangered species and what would be done to protect the species involved during construction of ROWs.

112-13 RECREATION

The plan speaks in terms of enhanced or increased recreation opportunities for all alternatives. DEIS at S-11. However, all the alternatives, except for alternative B, would result in a net loss of land due to land exchanges and sales. Despite various attempts mentioned in the plan to improve recreation, net loss of the land base would almost certainly lead to less recreational opportunity because there would be less land in which to recreate.

The map on lands to be disposed of indicates both large and small parcels throughout a wide geographic area will be gone. This is particularly serious when looking at future needs of the population of the surrounding areas. Map 2-25 indicates that the land lost is dispersed over a wide area in both large and small parcels which means that land formerly available to nearby residents will now be unavailable for recreation.

Alternative B is the only alternative that provides for a net gain in acreage.

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112-11 The Continuing Management Guidance has been changed to state that no herbicide treatments will be allowed except for selective treatment of non-native species such as salt cedar (see Final page 2-36). In most chemical treatments, a mosaic effect would be created by leaving out large arroyos and all riparian areas. Also see the response to Comment 112-5. Suppression of wildfire in riparian habitats will have a high priority unless fire is a natural part of the ecosystem.

112-12 A site-specific environmental assessment (including on-the-ground surveys if necessary) would be prepared for each right-of-way prior to construction. Potential impacts to special status plants would be analyzed and species would be protected under the Endangered Species Act and in accordance with BLM policy.

112-13 A net loss of land does not necessarily mean that a net loss of recreation opportunities would result. All the alternatives propose significant increases in legal public access routes, which are necessary to allow the public to enjoy recreation use on public lands. There are currently some areas of public land that are not accessible for public recreation. Exchange of some of these lands for others that would provide access will increase recreation opportunities. Furthermore, not all lands have the same recreation potential. The typical section of public land identified for disposal is not only inaccessible to the public but also has little potential for uses beyond livestock grazing. The typical section of land identified for acquisition would not only provide access to or be accessible from other public land, but also possesses some special resource values that contribute opportunities for hiking, hunting, camping, or other forms of recreation that far exceed those opportunities on parcels identified for disposal. Exchanges will enhance opportunities for and qualities of recreation opportunities, increasing revenues to local economies through sales of gasoline, outdoor equipment, etc.

Tim Salt, Area Manager
25 November 1991
Page 7

112-13 (Con't) Alternative A, the no-action alternative, results in a net loss of 44,000 acres. The preferred alternative D, provides for a loss of 10,000 acres. D should be revised to gain some acreage.

WILDLIFE HABITAT

112-14 Based on the results of studies on the impacts of livestock grazing analyses in the Southern Rio Grande EIS and Las Cruces/Lordsburg MFPA/EIS, the plan states there was increased habitat and wildlife diversity and increased forage for big game. DEIS at 4-10. The inference is that the same would be true for the Mimbres Area.

However, little detail is given as to how competition for forage would improve wildlife diversity. Also, it has been a common complaint that changing of the rangeland through grazing has favored big game species but disfavored other types of wildlife. The plan does not discuss the tradeoffs before concluding that grazing is beneficial for wildlife habitat.

112-15 Vegetation treatments are seen as causing short-term loss of wildlife feed and cover loss and temporary displacement. DEIS at 4-10. There is no discussion as to which times of the year are critical for various types of wildlife, (particularly endangered and threatened species) and what time of year would be least disruptive. Discussion on this point would seem to be warranted.
Also, it isn't clear to the reader how burning and chemically treating vegetation would "reduce[d] erosion of wildlife habitat." DEIS at 4-10.

ACECS

112-16 The preferred alternative proposes fencing some of the ACECs to prevent grazing and that "AUs for the most part would remain the same" in ACECs. DEIS at 4-107. The plan insists:

> The development of six new Habitat Management Plans (HMPs) would benefit livestock and wildlife by identifying conflicts and proposing appropriate measures to remedy these problem areas. All of the new plans would involve species which can coexist with livestock.

Assuming BLM means existing wildlife rather than introducing other species, these two sentences seem inconsistent, in light of an earlier statement at 4-58 that "Exclusion of grazing would reduce competition between livestock and wildlife in key habitats (particularly for desert bighorn sheep) for forage, cover and spaces."

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112-14 The Southern Rio Grande (SRG) MFP/EIS covered Doña Ana, Sierra, and portions of Luna Counties. The Las Cruces/Lordsburg MFPA/EIS covered the rest of the Resource Area for grazing, and the entire Resource Area for land treatments and energy minerals. Together these plans applied to the entire Resource Area. The RMP would carry forward provisions related to livestock grazing on public land in the Resource Area. The RMP stated that "The impacts on wildlife from livestock grazing as analyzed in the SRG and EISs were increased habitat and wildlife diversity and increased forage for big game." This statement refers to the entire grazing program which includes range improvement projects, allotment management planning, vegetation treatments, riparian enhancement and watershed management planning. Programs such as these enhance habitat diversity, and improve vegetation and watershed conditions.

112-15 Most areas proposed for treatment consist of creosotebush and tarbush. These species do not provide a significant amount of food for wildlife. In terrain most commonly treated, wildlife food and cover are provided by arroyos and drainages which usually extend through the treatment area. These drainages are deleted from treatment because they are considered as important wildlife habitat features. Brush is usually treated in the fall when plants are dormant. Treatment only occurs on areas where the soil will allow the chemical to percolate to the root level of the shrubs, thereby not affecting grasses and forbs. Burning or chemically treating vegetation results in long-term reduction of soil erosion by increasing vegetative ground cover, reducing runoff, and increasing percolation of water into the soil.

112-16 Under the Proposed Plan, only small portions of ACECs would be fenced. The areas proposed for fencing would consist of riparian areas and the proposed fencing projects would be small exclosures (1-10 acres). Animal units (AUs) would not be affected due to the small size of the areas excluded from grazing. The six proposed HMPs would be concerned with pronghorn antelope, mule deer, non-game and small game animals. This would not preclude re-introduction programs on the same areas. Under proper grazing management, these species, as well as others, can co-exist with livestock. The statements made on page 4-58 (Alternative B) and page 4-107 of the Draft RMP/EIS (Alternative D) appear inconsistent with each other, as they are in different alternatives. Alternative B places primary emphasis on protection of wildlife habitat and other environmental values through removal of livestock use, while the Proposed Plan (formerly Alternative D) places primary emphasis on protection of environmental values through proper management of livestock grazing. At this level of planning it is not possible to determine specific management guidelines for proposed HMPs. As in the past, specific management and requirements will be determined during the development of the HMP.

112-16 (Con't) There is no discussion of the other species involved or why it is believed that they will coexist with livestock. This is particularly questionable given that the AUs will not decrease. The new HMPs are supposed to develop solutions to any conflicts but they have not been done yet and there is no information as to the level of management to implement any reforms. This is another case where the analysis is to occur later and the reader has no actual data, no firm plan and no way of knowing whether the alternative recommended is workable.

112-17 A comparison of Map 2-26 (ACECs under alternative D) with Map 2-27 (vehicle designations under alternative D) shows another area where site-specific decisions have apparently been made without the required specific NEPA analysis. It appears that the ACECs frequently overlap with new and existing vehicle designations. In response to this site-specific decision there should be more discussion and analysis on how this will impact special resources such as threatened plants.

CONCLUSION

The DEIS should be redrafted in light of the lack of specificity throughout the document. The EIS should have more detail and data to explain the alternatives proposed and conclusions made in the document. Also, where other documents are referred to that the reader does not have, the passages referred to should be excerpted or summarized.[4] Further, the DEIS should provide more analysis, rather than repeatedly deferring to the MSA.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this document.

Respectfully submitted,

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[4] For example, the Management Situation Analysis (MSA) is repeatedly referred to, but no explanation is given as to the contents of the passage referenced.

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112-17 The proposed vehicle designations for each alternative were developed to protect resource values and to correspond with ACEC designations. In many cases, the protection of the resource values for which an ACEC is proposed is best accomplished by limiting vehicles to designated roads and trails or excluding vehicles altogether. The required NEPA analysis is included in Chapter 4 of this document. Additional site-specific environmental assessments (EAs) will be prepared as necessary as vehicle designations are implemented.

113

MESILLA VALLEY
AUDUBON
SOCIETY

PO BOX 3127 UPB LAS CRUCES NM 88003

November 20, 1991

Mr. Scott Florence, RMP Team Leader
Bureau of Land Management-Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Dear Mr. Florence:

Your draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement has been received and certainly represents a great deal of effort on your part. We are particularly pleased that you have apparently done a thourough job of identifying special areas for special management in the form of ACEC designation. You have chosen Alternative "D" as your preferred alternative. This alternative has many good features, but since our primary concern is long term ecological preservation and especially since we consider Mimbres Resource Area to be one of the richest resource areas nationally from the standpoint of species diversity, we strongly urge, with a few exceptions, the guidelines set out in Alternative "B".

113-1 One such exception is in regard to "Land Ownership Adjustments". The lands identified for disposal in Alternative "D" are agreeable to us except we encourage you to not dispose of the 2,310 acres identified by Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition east of the proposed Organ/Franklin Mountains ACEC and for the same reason we recommend retention of E 1/2 Sec.19,E 1/2 Sec.30 and SW 1/4 Sec. 31 T21S,R1E, next to the Dona Ana Mountains ACEC. These retentions will not only give some buffer to the ACEC's, but also will provide some diversity of topography and biology. In both cases the importance is heightened by the fact that preservation of cacti species is one of the reasons for creation of the ACEC. The buffer should enhance protection. We strongly endorse acquisition of the lands identified in Alternative "B" especially those lands located in ACEC's and Wilderness Study Areas.

113-1 See response to Comment 46-1.

113

Regarding vehicle management, formal designation of roads and trails
is the only effective way to control vehicular traffic. In the environment
of almost all of Mimbres Resource Area, a one time crossing of an area by
vehicles will create an "existing" road, therefore no control. We
especially object to designation of the area within the Lordsburg Playas as
an "open" area. This area is currently roadless, offers good habitat for
migrating shore birds, and abuts a proposed ACEC. The proposed open area
113-2 along with the proposed ACEC qualify for designation as "Wilderness" and
should be so designated. Within "Wilderness" designation we support the
added protection of ACEC designation for the area proposed in alternatives
"B" and "D".

Finally regarding proposed ACEC designations: Both Alternative "B" and
"D" take an aggressive approach to ACEC designation. We applaud this
recognition of the special values in Mimbres Resource Area.
The individual management proposals found in Alternative "B" are much
superior to the other alternatives however. Considering those proposed
ACEC's to be established for biological recognition, it is imperative that
all areas be withdrawn from locatable mineral entry and nonenergy
mineral leasing. As well, use of an unnatural agent, such as herbicide, to
manipulate the vegetation of an area is inconsistent with the concept of
recognizing the biological uniqueness of the area. These same proposed
ACECs should have an added prescription which restricts collection of
plants or animals to those collections authorized by special permit, and
these only for research or educational reasons. Vehicular traffic in all
ACECs should be restricted to designated roads. Additionally, in those
areas where an ACEC coincides with a Wilderness Study Area, if the area
113-3 is designated wilderness, we feel that the ACEC designation should remain
in force and not diluted by an overall WMP. We feel that the two
designations have their own specific roles in resource protection.

Looking at each proposed ACEC we suggest the following:

Aden Lava Flow - The two biggest problems we see here are the ORV use,
especially during hunting season and the extent that this area is
overgrazed. The first problem will be helped by your planned limit of
vehicular use to designated roads only. the second problem mentioned is
apparently one of longer term solution. Many in the environmental
community openly supported your attempt to not increase the permanent
113-4 preference here. The exclosures in the area as well as the general
appearance of the area indicate the area is being grazed excessively and
we recommend resting this area from livestock grazing. The past research
in this area particularly in the study of melanistic evolution has been
significant and additional efforts should be encouraged.

113-2 See response to Comment 61-3.

113-3 See response to Comment 29-3.

113-4 See response to Comment 18-2.

113

Alamo Hueco Mountains- The importance of this area as desert bighorn sheep habitat is significant. Livestock grazing appears to me very light on the higher lands, but is severe on the important riparian areas. Livestock grazing therefore should be eliminated as proposed in Alternative "B", to provide maximum protection for bighorn sheep and riparian preservation.

113-5 Antelope Pass- We have found no research into the effects of tebuthiron on reptiles or other herptofauna, yet these animals are the primary reason for designating this area an ACEC. To suggest application of this herbicide or probably any other chemical in this area for brush control is inconsistent with the intent of the ACEC designation.

Apache Box- As suggested in Alternative "B", we strongly support exclusion of livestock grazing from this ACEC. Much of the area, especially the riparian area received by you from the Nature Conservancy has not been impacted by livestock in recent years. The pristine values should be maintained.
113-6 Additionally, there does appear to be a potential for potassium in this area based on your map. Exclusion from nonenergy mineral leasing is a must.

113-7 Bear Creek- Your plans here under Alternative "D" seem adequate, if exclusion from locatable mineral entry is added.

Big Hatchet Mountains- Here again maximum protection of desert bighorn sheep and their habitat in this area supports the recommendation in Alternative "B" that commercial livestock grazing be excluded.
113-8 No rationale is given for the reduced acreage for this ACEC in Alternative "D" versus Alternative "B". We opt for the larger area which is totally, or almost totally included in the existing WSA, to maintain the integrity of this large roadless area, with its nationally recognized biological and geological values.

113-9 Bishop's Cap, Fillmore Canyon, Franklin Mountains, Ice Canyon are four of six areas recommended for ACEC status in the Organ Mountain CRMP. We feel that these four areas plus Indian Hollow and Achenbach Canyon, with boundary changes as recommended by The Nature Conservancy in their study for you, should receive individual specific management prescriptions as opposed to being lumped into one large Organ/ Franklin Mountians ACEC. Some of the prescriptions included in the CRMP are rightfully more restrictive than you will undoubtedly agree to for the entire mountain range. Such items as restricted camping, restricted trail locations, restricted recreational development etc. are especially necessary in these areas.

113-5 The habitat needs of endangered species such as those dependent on the desert shrub habitat of the proposed Antelope Pass RNA will be considered in the evaluation of any proposed chemical brush control project. No actions will be undertaken that will be inconsistent with the needs of endangered species or with the special management needs of any resource for which an ACEC or RNA is designated.

113-6 See response to Comment 29-6.

113-7 See responses to Comments 29-4 and 29-5.

113-8 See response to Comment 73-6.

113-9 Management of these areas as outlined in the Organ Mountains Coordinated Resource Management Plan as amended, is incorporated by reference in the ACEC management prescriptions for the area. Even so, we have added several specific restrictions that apply to Ice Canyon to the management prescriptions.

113

113-10 Box Canyon-ORV use and livestock grazing in this area has frustrated some of your efforts to establish and nature's attempts to regenerate cottonwood trees in the canyon bottom. We supportthe Alternative "D" to fence the arroyo habitat below the dam, but hope you intend to fence more that 1/4 mile(1/2 mile of fence divided by two) of the arroyo. We assume you are relying on the cliffs in part of the area to restrict livestock.

113-11 Cedar Mountains- This area is not proposed for ACEC status under Alternative "D", but particularly in Rock Hole Canyon there is the remnants of a riparian or semi-riparian area that has been damaged historically and continues to be damaged by overgrazing. This problem needs to be addressed. The area should be managed for ROS semi-primitive nonmotorized class.

Central Peloncillo Mountains-Exclusion of livestock from the areas indicated in Alternative "D" is a minimum.

Cooke's Range-Alternative "D" seems acceptable except for the added provisions listed in general above relating to locatable mineral withdrawal, collecting etc.

113-12 Cowboy Spring-We understand that this area is very heavily grazed at this time. Given the biological importance of this area we do not feel current livestock grazing practices should be maintained as you recommend.

Dona Ana Mountains-Retention of the buffer area described above along with the added general provisions recommended earlier will greatly enhance protection of this area.

Florida Mountains-Persian ibex should be eliminated from this area. In addition the general statements above relating to withdrawal from locatable minerals, chemical brush control, and ACEC status under wilderness desgnation apply.

Gila Lower Box-Livestock should remain excluded from river bottom by existing fence.

Granite Gap- There are no improved roads in this proposed ACEC. To avoid further illegal wood cutting and especially to protect the special flora and fauna from illegal collection, motorized vehicles should not be allowed and only primitive recreation allowed within the ACEC. Withdrawal from locatable mineral entry is imperative. 113-13

113-10 One-half mile of fencing should be adequate to enclose the small riparian area approximately 100 yards downstream from the dam, as well as the majority of arroyo habitat on public land.

113-11 Although an ROS inventory has not been completed for the Resource Area, the proposed vehicle designations would limit vehicles in the Cedar Mountains to existing roads and trails. These limitations would maintain the existing recreation opportunities in the area, which are equivalent to the semi-primitive motorized class along roads and semi-primitive nonmotorized class away from roads.

113-12 See response to Comment 18-4.

113-13 See responses to Comments 29-4 and 29-5.

113

113-14 Guadalupe Canyon-This area should be managed for semi-primitive nonmotorized class objectives.

Las Uvas Mountains-This area is extremely scenic, rich in areas of historical and archaeological significance and should be designated an ACEC. In addition to the provisions of Alternative "B" we recommend withdrawal from locatable mineral entry, and suggest management for semi-primative nonmotorized class.

Lordsburg Playa-In addition to the general comments about ACECs, the
grazing program here needs close study. We feel that the current
management system of high intensity-short duration is improper,
113-15 particularly if timing of entry is not particularly judicious. We are very
concerned about the ecology of this area as the dunes try to stabilize with
cryptogamic crusts. These crusts are particularly susceptible to damage
and if destroyed during the dry periods of the year will recover only very
slowly if at all. Our concern obviously goes beyond just the potential
grazing damage to the sensitive plant *Atriplex griffithsii*. Sodium
113-16 development is listed as potential here and again we ask that nonenergy
mineral leasing be prohibited.

Northern Peloncillo Mountains-This area should be protected as roadless as an addition to the wilderness designation on adjoining land in Arizona.

Robledo Mountains-Alternative "D" is endorsed with the added features listed previously that should apply to all ACECs.

Tres Hermanas-While supporting your view that there are other areas more deserving of ACEC status, we suggest that this area has very desireable potential for low impact day use for picnicing and semi-primitive camping.

Uvas Valley-This area has benefited from very conservative grazing
practices. A good monitoring system to ensure its continuance should be a
prime objective. Probably more important than percent of utilization is
113-17 the rest from grazing especially during the growing season. We do not
support the use of chemical brush control in this area.

113-14 The proposed Guadalupe Canyon ACEC will be managed for semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunities along existing roads and semi-primitive nonmotorized recreation opportunities off of the existing roads. It is impossible to manage existing roads for nonmotorized recreation opportunities, especially as in this case where the existing road provides access to private land.

113-15 See Comment 29-12. A Holistic Resource Management (HRM) system allows for very short periods of high intensity grazing. The remainder of the year these areas are given prolonged periods of rest. Most of the data on HRM systems have shown improvement in vegetation communities through increased cover and production. This would cause reduced soil erosion which would mean an overall improvement in rangeland condition. This HRM system has only been in operation for 3 years. BLM collects extensive vegetation information on all allotments which are being intensively monitored as this one will be. Information dealing with cryptogamic crusts in relation to HRM is unknown.

113-16 See response to Comment 29-16.

113-17 See responses to Comments 29-4 and 29-5.

113

113-18 Finally, we trust that effective monitoring systems will be instituted to follow biological community or species conditions in those ACECs where this is the management concern, and that site specific maps will be included in the final EIS.

We very much appreciate the opportunity to comment on this plan. Our views have been considered long and hard. We hope you will give them careful consideration.

Sincerely,

Catherine I. Sandell

Catherine I. Sandell
Vice President

113-18 See responses to Comments 107-1 and 29-2.

114

Ron Cheyne
Duncan Arizona

Dear Mr. Salt
I am in favor of
Proposal A.

Sincerely
Ron Cheyne

115

Nov. 25, 1991

Tim Salt
Area Manager BLM
1800 Marquss St.
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Sir,

We din BLM's present involvement in land use in Hidalgo County's sufficient governmental involvement, and would appose any futher broadening of Federal Government managment of land in Hidalgo County.

We also appose any area of critical environmental concern designation in Hidalgo County because of thier restrictive nature. Present vehicular management and access has sufficed for many years, and more burdensome management is not called for.

Therefore we favor Alternative A, (continuing present management on all issues.)

Sincerely,

Mr. and Mrs. Ernie Fralie

116

Memo from **Adair Merrell**

To Tim Salt
Date 11-23-91

Subject

Dear Mr Salt:

I am not in favor of having any additional land designated to protect the endangered species in this area.

I believe there is sufficient land on the Gray Ranch to provide protection for these species -

I am in favor of leaving the BLM land in Hidalgo County as it is at the present time -

Thanks
Adair Merrell

117

DO YOU WANT THE FEDERAL BUREAUCRATS CONTROLLING OUR FUTURE OR DO YOU WANT YOUR LOCAL *ELECTED* OFFICIALS TO SAY WHAT GOES ON IN LUNA COUNTY?

The Federal Government (BLM) is presently planning an expensive Resource Management Plan (RMP) for Luna, Hidalgo, Dona Ana, and part of Grant Counties.

This plan identifies these four issues:

1. Land ownership adjustments.
2. Areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC's) and special management area (SMA's).
3. Vehicle management.
4. Access.

149320 9140 a

1. In the land ownership adjustment issue, the BLM plans to dispose of 158,460 acres of federal land, acquire 93,110 acres of State Trust Land, and also acquire 56,210 acres of private land.

This exchange of lands would cost the taxpayers **millions** of dollars in lost taxes and revenues, as well as some loss of local control.

This exchange would also have a large adverse economic impact on Luna County as a whole and especially on the agriculture community, which is the predominant base to our local economy.

2. The BLM is proposing several different "Areas of Critical Environmental Concern" in Luna County to be controlled by BLM regulations. These areas total over 48,000 acres. Because of their highly restrictive nature (closing roads, closure to mineral leasing, allowing fires to burn, etc.)
THEY NEED TO BE OPPOSED!

3 & 4. On the vehicle management and access issues, the BLM plans to tell the public **which** roads they can use on 539,640 acres. They also plan to "**close**" 126,360 acres, substantially if not totally preventing access to public lands.

The Luna County Commission has adopted a plan (Interim Land Use Plan) that opposes this dictatorial resource management plan proposed by the BLM.

CITIZEN INPUT IS NEEDED TO REINFORCE THIS OPPOSITION!

YOUR PROTEST MUST BE MADE BEFORE NOVEMBER 25TH TO BE EFFECTIVE.

We strongly urge you to protect the local government from more federal interference by sending the following letter to the BLM:

- -

WE HAVE MINING CLAIMS IN LUNA CO. WHEN WE VISITED THE BLM OFFICE TO LEARN OUR RIGHTS, ETC, WE MET COURTEOUS, BUSINESS-LIKE PEOPLE. THE ONLY TIMES WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED BLOCKED ACCESS, IT WAS IN THE FORM OF GATES ACROSS DESIGNATED BLM ROADS, PLACED THERE BY RANCHERS - + IN 2 CASES BY MINERS (WHO'S BOGGING WHOM HERE?!)

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Sir:

~~I~~ WE deem BLM's present involvement in land use in Luna County IN- sufficient governmental involvement and would NOT oppose any further broadening of federal government management of lands in Luna County.

We also DO NOT oppose any Area of Critical Environmental Concern Designation in Luna County because of their "restrictive" nature.

Present vehicular management and access has sufficed for many years and PERHAPS more ~~[illegible]~~ management is ~~not~~ called for.

Therefore, ~~I~~ WE DO NOT favor Alternative A (continuing present management) on all the issues.

Sincerely,
Lois B. Kant
Page H. Kant

(signature)
(address) RT 1 Box 118CC DEMING, N.M 88030

118

Nov 25, 1991

Jim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Sir:

I offer the following comments on the RMP that BLM is planning for Luna, Hidalgo, Dona Ana and parts of Grant counties. I feel that there is enough Government involvement presently and that all BLM lands are being managed properly, therefore I favor Alternative A on all issues.

Sincerely,
Edward Elbrock
Box 25
Animas N Mex 88020

119

Mr Tim Salt.

Dear Sir;

119-1 I understand that the Land in
the Southern Part of Hidalgo county
is to condemed, & bought by

I would Like to have the Land
& Lease Stay as is.

or if you wont to sell B.L.M.
Land. sell it to the Ranchers
they have Been the ones to take
care of it For Years - they have been
out Lots of money on Leases & Improvement
& Reseeding & Soil conservation Ect.

Jessie Evans

119-1 See response to Comment 92-1.

120

From the Desk of . . .

HENRY TORKELSON

Dear Sir,

I would appreciate more information
on the land use plan for Luna
county. It is not clear to me
what part the county will play,
120-1 and what control will they have over
Luna county Public Land. also would
120-2 like to know who can purchase land that will
be up for sale or trade. & why the closing
120-3 of all these roads.
Any information you can give me will
be appreciated!
Thanking you in advance for your
cooperation & support in this matter

Sincerely

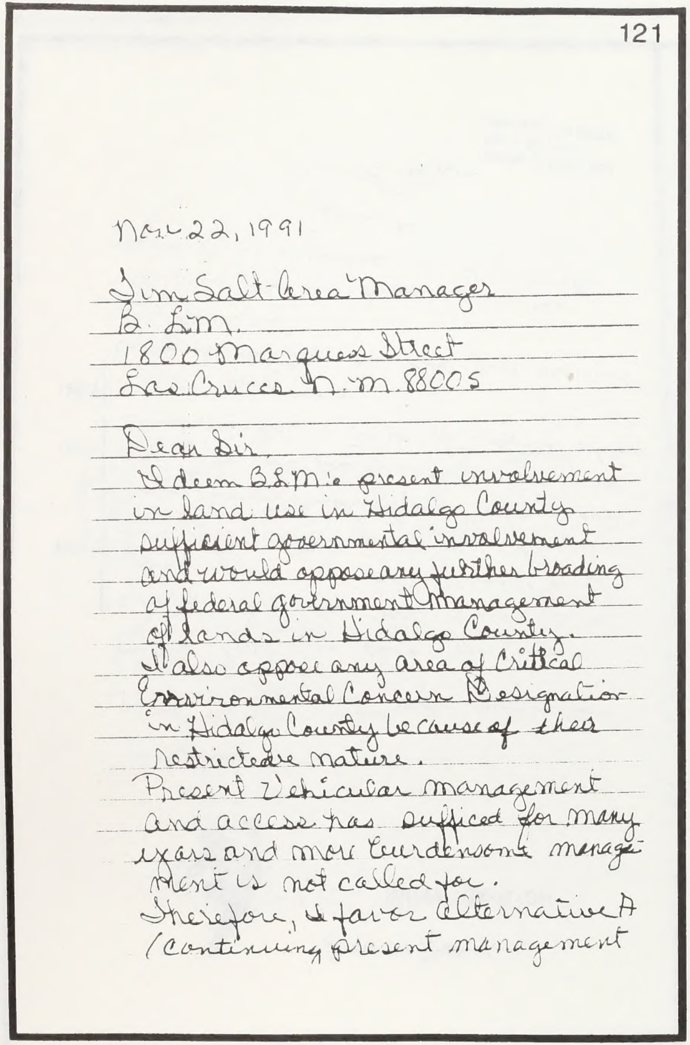
Henry Torkelson

Henry J. Torkelson
RR 2 Box 876
Deming, NM 88030

120-1 The plan you refer to is the Interim Land Use Policy Plan adopted by the Luna County Board of County Commissioners on November 8, 1991. This plan has no direct control over public land that is administered by the BLM. Federal laws require the BLM to develop land use plans in coordination with local governments. These same laws also require that these plans be as consistent as possible with the plans of local governments. In some cases, where conflicts occur between Federal laws and local ordinances, total consistency may not be possible.

120-2 Any public land designated for disposal in the Mimbres Resource Area will be disposed of through the exchange program or by direct sale. The sales will be open to the public. Section 203 of Federal Land Policy and Management Act provides specific authority for the sale of public land. See page 2-10 of the RMP/EIS.

120-3 The RMP does not propose the closure of roads in large areas of Luna County or elsewhere in the Mimbres Resource Area. Some areas near the border would be closed to vehicle use except for use by special permit to enhance law enforcement efforts along the International border. Grazing permittees would be authorized to use ranch roads necessary to their operations.



Nov 22, 1991

Jim Salt-Area Manager
B.L.M.
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces N.M. 88005

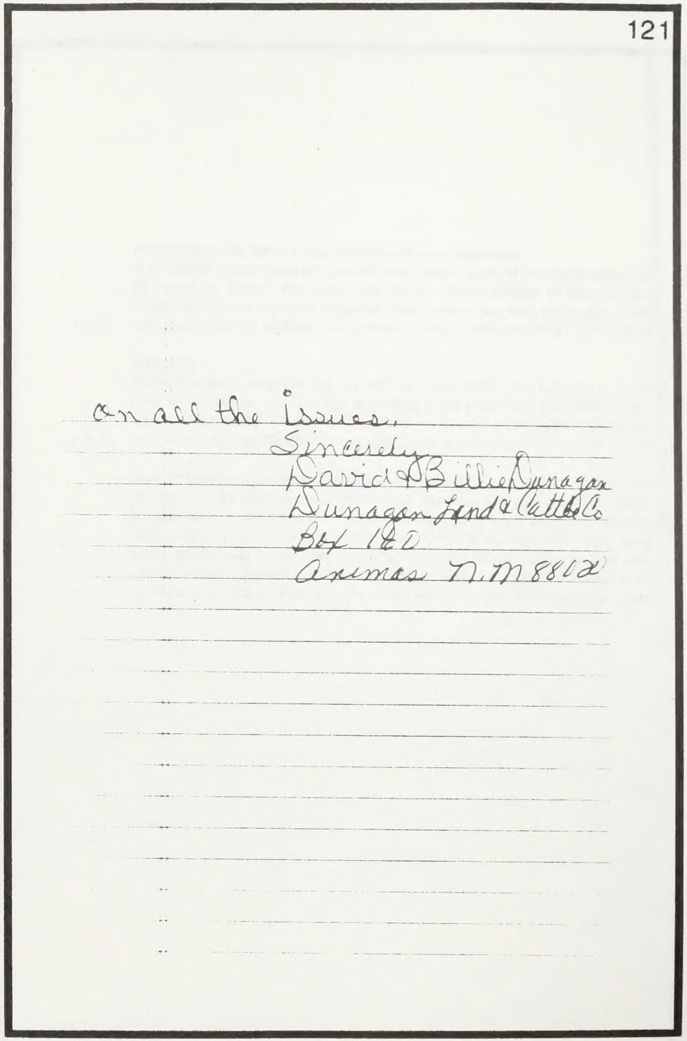
Dear Sir,

I deem B.L.M.'s present involvement in land use in Hidalgo County sufficient governmental involvement and would oppose any further broading of federal government management of lands in Hidalgo County.

I also oppose any area of Critical Environmental Concern Designation in Hidalgo County because of their restrictedive nature.

Present Vehicular management and access has sufficed for many years and more burdensome management is not called for.

Therefore, I favor Alternative A (continuing present management



on all the issues.

Sincerely
David & Billie Dunagan
Dunagan Land & Cattle Co
Box 120
Animas N.M 88020

122

November 22, 1991

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Sir:

I deem BLM's present involvement in land use in Hidalgo County sufficient governmental involvement and would oppose any further broadening of federal government management of lands in Hidalgo County.

I also oppose any Areas of Critical Environmental Concern designation in Hidalgo County because of their restrictive nature.

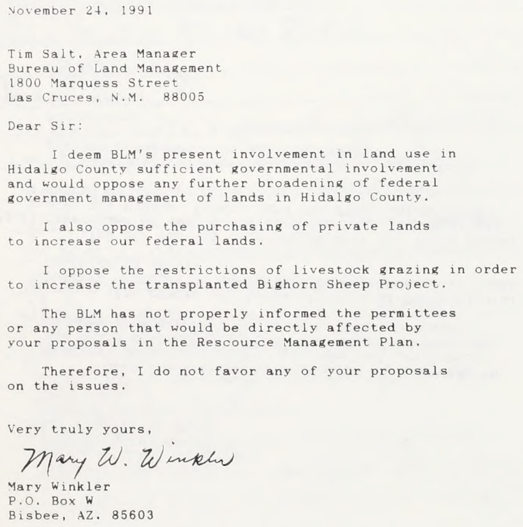
122-1 The BLM has not coordinated with the local county government to see if its Land Use Plan is compatible with the Hidalgo County Land Use Plan, which is required by law.

Therefore, I favor Alternative A (continuing present management) on all the issues.

Sincerely,

122-1 See response to Comment 52-1.

123



November 24, 1991

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, N.M. 88005

Dear Sir:

I deem BLM's present involvement in land use in Hidalgo County sufficient governmental involvement and would oppose any further broadening of federal government management of lands in Hidalgo County.

I also oppose the purchasing of private lands to increase our federal lands.

I oppose the restrictions of livestock grazing in order to increase the transplanted Bighorn Sheep Project.

123-1 The BLM has not properly informed the permittees or any person that would be directly affected by your proposals in the Rescource Management Plan.

Therefore, I do not favor any of your proposals on the issues.

Very truly yours,

Mary W. Winkler

Mary Winkler
P.O. Box W
Bisbee, AZ. 85603

123-1 See response to Comment 87-1.

124

November 24, 1991

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, N.M. 88005

Dear Sir:

I deem BLM's present involvement in land use in Hidalgo County sufficient governmental involvement and would oppose any further broadening of federal government management of lands in Hidalgo County.

I also oppose the purchasing of private lands to increase our federal lands.

I oppose the restrictions of livestock grazing in order to increase the transplanted Bighorn Sheep Project.

124-1 The BLM has not properly informed the permittees or any person that would be directly affected by your proposals in the Rescource Management Plan.

Therefore, I do not favor any of your proposals on the issues.

Very truly yours,

Edward Roos IV

Edward Roos IV
P.O. Box 33
Rodeo, N.M. 88056

124-1 See response to Comment 87-1.

125

Hurt Cattle Co., Inc.
P.O. Box 189
Deming, New Mexico 88031
(505) 546-2485

NOVEMBER 23, 1991

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

I deem BLM'S present involvement in land use in Hidalgo County sufficient governmental involvement and would oppose any further broadening of federal government management of lands in Hidalgo County.

I also oppose any Area of Critical Environmental Concern Designation in Hidalgo,Grant and Luna County because of their restrictive nature.

Present vehicular management and access has sufficed for many years and more burdensome management is not called for.

Therefore, I favor Alternative A (continuing present management) on all the issues.

Sincerely,

Velva W. Hurt
P.O. Box 293
Deming, NM 88031

126

Hurt Cattle Co., Inc.
P.O. Box 189
Deming, New Mexico 88031
(505) 546-2485

NOVEMBER 23, 1991

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

I deem BLM'S present involvement in land use in Hidalgo County sufficient governmental involvement and would oppose any further broadening of federal government management of lands in Hidalgo County.

I also oppose any Area of Critical Environmental Concern Designation in Hidalgo,Grant and Luna County because of their restrictive nature.

Present vehicular management and access has sufficed for many years and more burdensome management is not called for.

Therefore, I favor Alternative A (continuing present management) on all the issues.

Sincerely,

James W. Hurt

James W. Hurt
P.O. Box 293
Deming, NM 88031

127

Hurt Cattle Co., Inc.
P.O. Box 189
Deming, New Mexico 88031
(505) 546-2485

NOVEMBER 23, 1991

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

I deem BLM'S present involvement in land use in Hidalgo County sufficient governmental involvement and would oppose any further broadening of federal government management of lands in Hidalgo County.

I also oppose any Area of Critical Environmental Concern Designation in Hidalgo,Grant and Luna County because of their restrictive nature.

Present vehicular management and access has sufficed for many years and more burdensome management is not called for.

Therefore, I favor Alternative A (continuing present management) on all the issues.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Hurt

Lawrence B. Hurt
P.O. Box J
Playas,NM 88090

128

Hurt Cattle Co., Inc.
P.O. Box 189
Deming, New Mexico 88031
(505) 546-2485

NOVEMBER 23, 1991

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

I deem BLM'S present involvement in land use in Hidalgo County sufficient governmental involvement and would oppose any further broadening of federal government management of lands in Hidalgo County.

I also oppose any Area of Critical Environmental Concern Designation in Hidalgo,Grant and Luna County because of their restrictive nature.

Present vehicular management and access has sufficed for many years and more burdensome management is not called for.

Therefore, I favor Alternative A (continuing present management) on all the issues.

Sincerely,

Ernest Hurt

Ernest F. Hurt
P.O. Box 84
Hachita, NM 88040

129

Hurt Cattle Co., Inc.
P.O. Box 189
Deming, New Mexico 88031
(505) 546-2485

NOVEMBER 23, 1991

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

I deem BLM'S present involvement in land use in Hidalgo County sufficient governmental involvement and would oppose any further broadening of federal government management of lands in Hidalgo County.

I also oppose any Area of Critical Environmental Concern Designation in Hidalgo,Grant and Luna County because of their restrictive nature.

Present vehicular management and access has sufficed for many years and more burdensome management is not called for.

Therefore, I favor Alternative A (continuing present management) on all the issues.

Sincerely,

William Hurt

William Hurt
P.O. Box 81
Hachita, NM 88040

130

COMMENTS
Draft Resource Management Plan
and
Environmental Impact Statement

General Comments:
Issue 2 ACEC's
The DRMP/DEIS does not have in place the RMP that clearly identifies management objectives for the ADEN LAVA FLOW (each area) and what restrictions if any apply to other uses.

In the Alternative D the objective is:
Retain all public land; acquire all State trust and private lands.
Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails
Develop grazing activity plan.
If designated wilderness, ACEC designation would terminate and ACEC management prescriptions would be incorporated into RMP.
Manage for ROS primitive and semi-primitive nonmotorized classes.

130-1 It is my understanding that under Section 8 of PRIA a plan has to be developed with each permittee PRIOR to ACEC proposal. This requirement has not been accomplished so this DRMP/DEIS is not being properly presented at this time. It is in violation of PRIA (Public Rangelands Improvement Act.)

Any further comments I have will be taken up when we have our Section 8 meeting.

Mrs. Robert Cosimati
Mrs Robert Cosimati
Afton Allotment

130-1 The proposed Aden Lava Flow ACEC is no longer included in the Proposed Plan. The present Research Natural Area (RNA) designation would remain in effect.

131

Hurt Cattle Co., Inc.
P.O. Box 189
Deming, New Mexico 88031
(505) 546-2485

NOVEMBER 23, 1991

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

I deem BLM'S present involvement in land use in Hidalgo County sufficient governmental involvement and would oppose any further broadening of federal government management of lands in Hidalgo County.

I also oppose any Area of Critical Environmental Concern Designation in Hidalgo,Grant and Luna County because of their restrictive nature.

Present vehicular management and access has sufficed for many years and more burdensome management is not called for.

Therefore, I favor Alternative A (continuing present management) on all the issues.

Sincerely,

Avery T. Hurt

Avery T. Hurt
P.O. Box 244
Deming, NM 88031

132

NOVEMBER 23, 1991

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

I deem BLM'S present involvement in land use in Hidalgo County sufficient governmental involvement and would oppose any further broadening of federal government management of lands in Hidalgo County.

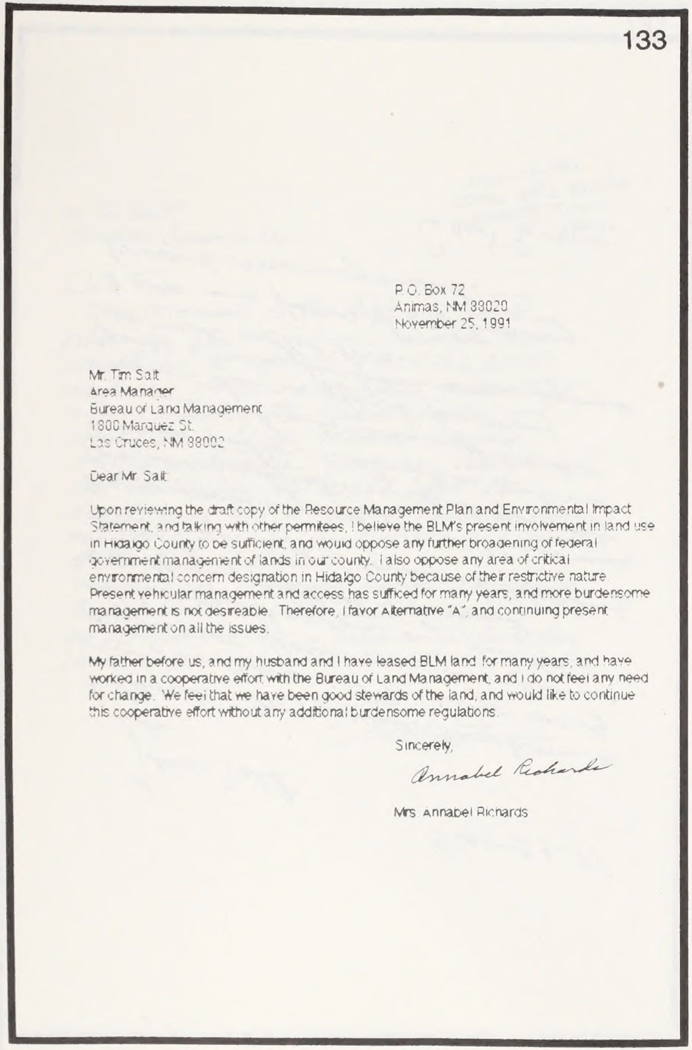
I also oppose any Area of Critical Environmental Concern Designation in Hidalgo,Grant and Luna County because of their restrictive nature.

Present vehicular management and access has sufficed for many years and more burdensome management is not called for.

Therefore, I favor Alternative A (continuing present management) on all the issues.

Sincerely,

Kelly S. Hurt
Box J
Playas, NM 88009



133

P.O. Box 72
Animas, NM 88020
November 25, 1991

Mr. Tim Salt
Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquez St.
Las Cruces, NM 88002

Dear Mr Salt:

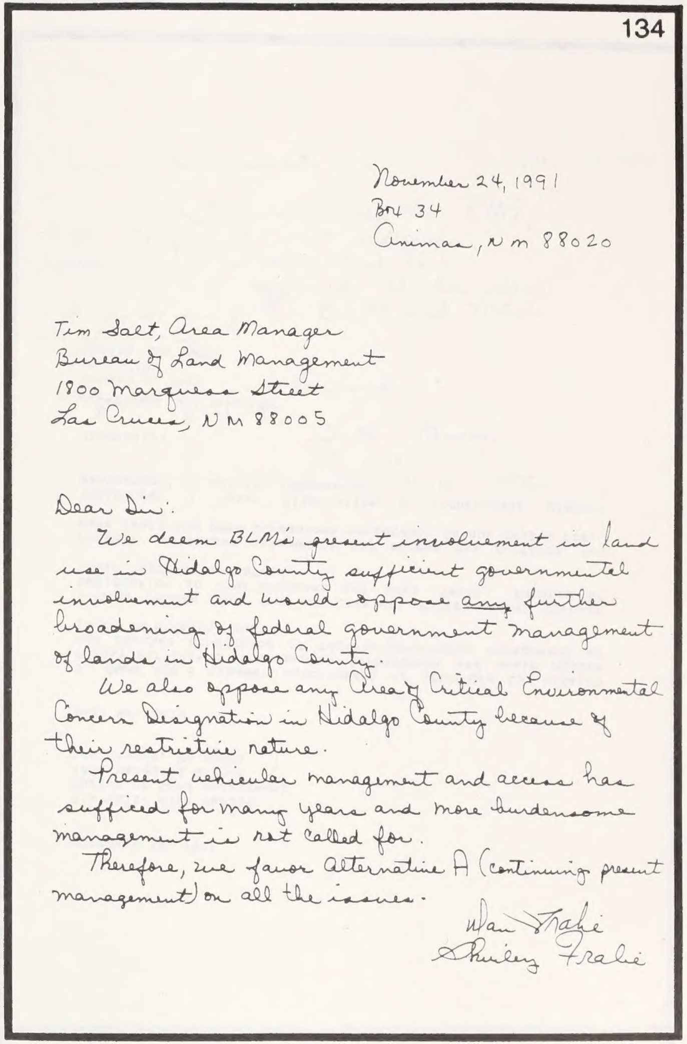
Upon reviewing the draft copy of the Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, and talking with other permitees, I believe the BLM's present involvement in land use in Hidalgo County to be sufficient, and would oppose any further broadening of federal government management of lands in our county. I also oppose any area of critical environmental concern designation in Hidalgo County because of their restrictive nature. Present vehicular management and access has sufficed for many years, and more burdensome management is not desireable. Therefore, I favor Alternative "A", and continuing present management on all the issues.

My father before us, and my husband and I have leased BLM land for many years, and have worked in a cooperative effort with the Bureau of Land Management, and I do not feel any need for change. We feel that we have been good stewards of the land, and would like to continue this cooperative effort without any additional burdensome regulations.

Sincerely,

Annabel Richards

Mrs. Annabel Richards



134

November 24, 1991
Box 34
Animas, NM 88020

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Sir:

We deem BLM's present involvement in land use in Hidalgo County sufficient governmental involvement and would oppose any further broadening of federal government management of lands in Hidalgo County.

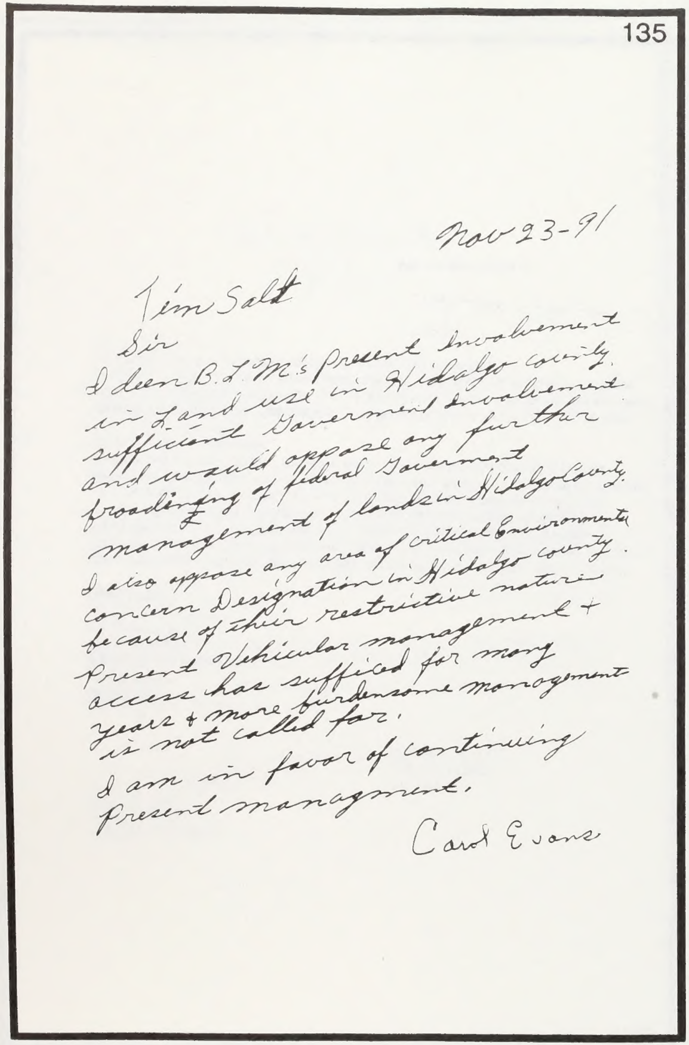
We also oppose any Area of Critical Environmental Concern Designation in Hidalgo County because of their restrictive nature.

Present vehicular management and access has sufficed for many years and more burdensome management is not called for.

Therefore, we favor Alternative A (continuing present management) on all the issues.

Wan Frahe
Shirley Fralie

135



Nov 23-91

Tim Salt

Sir

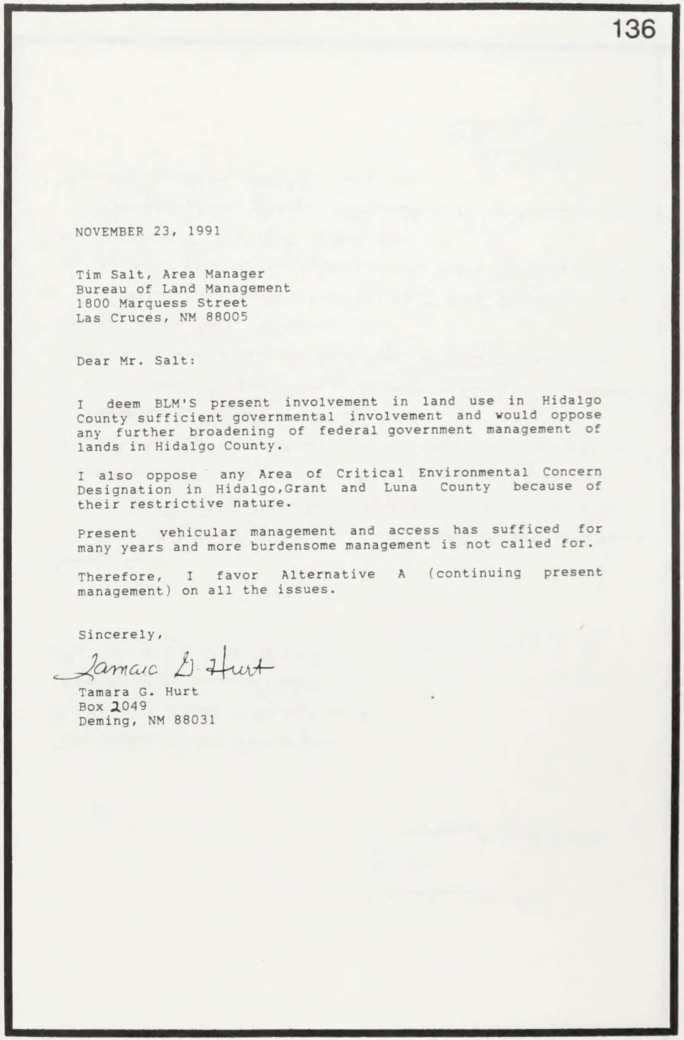
I deem B.L.M's present Involvement in Land use in Hidalgo county. sufficient Goverment Involvement and would oppose any further broadening of federal Goverment management of lands in Hidalgo County.

I also oppose any area of critical Environmental concern Designation in Hidalgo county. because of their restrictive nature + Present Vehicular management + access has sufficed for many years + more burdensome managment is not called for.

I am in favor of continuing present managment.

Carol Evans

136



NOVEMBER 23, 1991

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

I deem BLM'S present involvement in land use in Hidalgo County sufficient governmental involvement and would oppose any further broadening of federal government management of lands in Hidalgo County.

I also oppose any Area of Critical Environmental Concern Designation in Hidalgo,Grant and Luna County because of their restrictive nature.

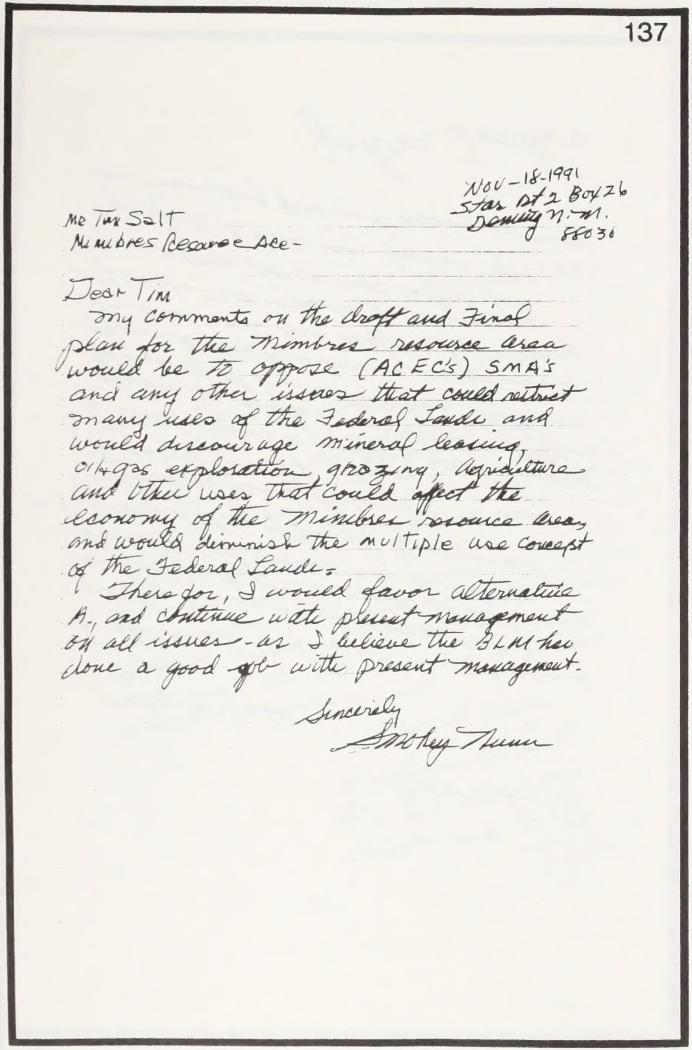
Present vehicular management and access has sufficed for many years and more burdensome management is not called for.

Therefore, I favor Alternative A (continuing present management) on all the issues.

Sincerely,

Tamara G. Hurt

Tamara G. Hurt
Box 2049
Deming, NM 88031


137

NOV-18-1991
Star Rt 2 Box 26
Deming N.M.
88030

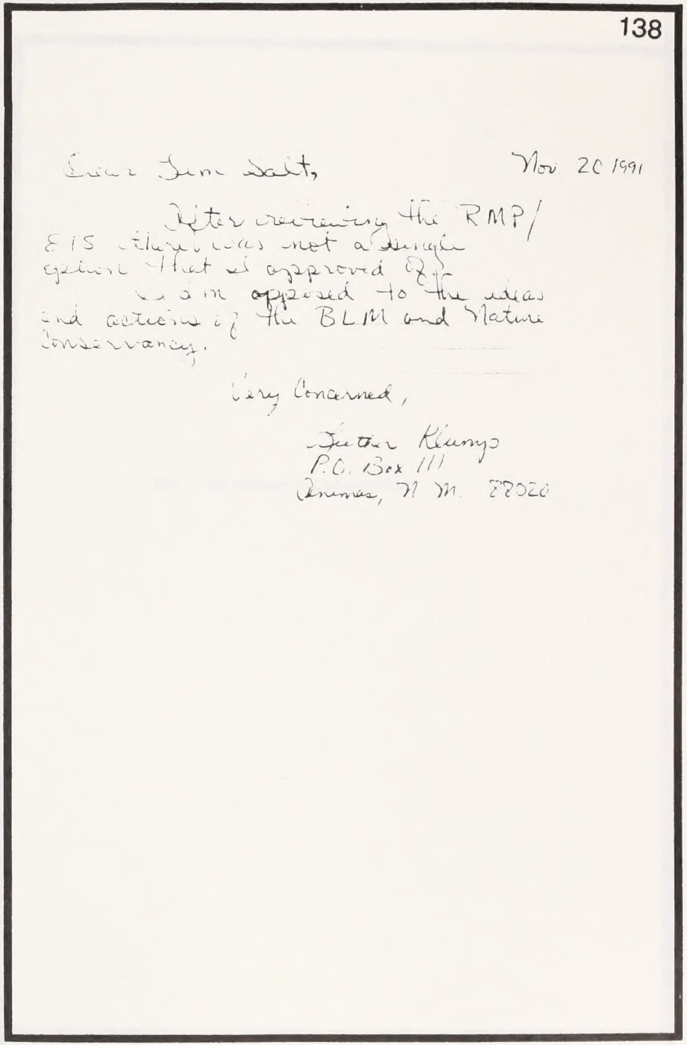
Mr Tim Salt
Mimbres Resource Are-

Dear Tim

My comments on the draft and Final plan for the Mimbres resource area would be to oppose (ACEC's) SMA's and any other issues that could retrict many uses of the Federal Lands and would discourage mineral leasing, oil+gas exploration, grazing, agriculture and other uses that could affect the economy of the Mimbres resource area, and would diminish the multiple use concept of the Federal Lands.

Therefor, I would favor alternative A, and continue with present management on all issues - as I believe the BLM has done a good job with present management.

Sincerely
Smokey Thum


138

Dear Tim Salt, Nov. 20 1991

After reviewing the RMP/EIS there was not a single option that I approved of.

I am opposed to the ideas and actions of the BLM and Nature Conservancy.

Very Concerned,

Luther Klump
P.O. Box 111
Animas, N.M. 88020

139

Nov 24-1991

Tim Salt.

Sir:
I deem B.L.M. Present involvement
in Land use in Hidalgo county.
sufficient Goverment Involvement
and would oppose any further
broadening of federal Goverment
management of lands in
Hidalgo county.
I also oppose any Critical environmental
Concern Designation in Hidalgo county
because of their restrictive nature.
Present vehicular management
and access has sufficed for many
years and more burdensome
management is not called for.
Therefore I am in favor of
continuing present management.

John Tooker

140

Nov 24 1991

Tim Salt.

Sir:

140-1 It has been called to my attention that the Land in Hidalgo County boath private & Gav't State Trust Lands are to be withdrawn from the People of Hidalgo and put in Nature conservacy. I am against this.

I favar continuing present management (private owner-Lease). If Gav. must sell this land why not to the peopl who now work & nurture it.

Thank you.

Addolinio Hill
H.C. 65 Box 192
Animas N.M.

140-1 See response to Comment 92-1.

141

DONALD H. COUCHMAN
Historian
Specializing in
Frontier, Western, and the Civil War

Rt. 1, Box 283A
La Mesa, New Mexico 88044
(505) 646-4012
Res. (505) 233-3137

November 27, 1991

Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Attention: Tim Salt, Manager, Mimbres Resource Area

Subject: Draft Resource Management Plan for Mimbres Resource Area

Copies to: Michael Mallouf, Archaeologist, Mimbres Resource Area
Robert L. Calkins, Manager, Las Cruces District Resources

The time limit for inputs to the referenced document apparently expired two days ago, however, since I first saw the item only yesterday, I will make a couple of very minor inputs anyway.

Being somewhat ignorant of exactly what attributes some of the alternatives reflect, and not having the opportunity to explore and debate the issues with any of your staff, I will make only general statements regarding a few of the ACECs, and offer some specific corrections or clarifications to others. Obviously the ACECS I am most interested in are the Fort Cummings, Cooke's Range, and Butterfield Trail, and support the most aggressive plans that would develop the areas rapidly and to simultaneously high levels of protection and visitor interpretation (despite this statement appearing to be an oxymoron).

141-1 I assume that keeping the Fort Cummings ACEC (page H-26) separate, rather than incorporating it into the Cooke's Range ACEC (page H-19), would be more advantageous to my desires. On the other hand, I would also like to see the initiation of protection and accessibility for the old Cooke's Peak District mining communities (Cooks, Jose, and Hadley) and the associated springs, which may require the blending of the two ACECs for maximum impact. In both these ACECs I strongly urge that the acquisition of the remaining private land, through trades or purchases, be assigned a maximum high priority.

141-2 The Massacre Peak ACEC (page H-39) contains three errors that should be corrected before final printing. Lieutenant Colonel Philip St. George Cooke's Mormon Battalion passed by, and noted, the Massacre Peak petroglyphs November 17, 1846. At this time, he and others recorded the existence of 30 or more bedrock grinding mortars (usually the number was 30-33). It is not clear from the contemporaneous journals whether the authors were including mortars on the slope north of the road or only those south in the still existing massive boulder. If the former is true, then perhaps, as the overview suggests, no mortars were destroyed in the quarrying of Sarten Sandstone. If, on the other hand the latter is true, we have lost more than half of the ancient mortars mentioned by Cooke and the various Mormons.

141-3 Perhaps it is only a matter of interpretation, but it would appear to me that Apache Box (page H-9), being 18 miles south of Mule Creek, would lie in the Northwest portion of Grant County rather than in the Southwest.

141-1 The BLM plans to acquire legal public access to the east side of the Cooke's Range (see page 2-40). This would allow for greater public access to the historical sites. Non-BLM lands within and in some cases adjacent to ACECs are identified for acquisition.

141-2 These corrections have been incorporated into the text.

141-3 These corrections have been incorporated into the text.

141

The Butterfield Trail ACEC (page H-55), perhaps by intention, omits any mention of the previous mail contractor who used the same route, through New Mexico, as did Butterfield. To avoid confusion in such a short description and to maintain continuity of name linkage (I have identified more than two dozen names associated with this trail segment), this is understandable and acceptable. 141-4 To strongly imply, however, that the Trail was used only after 1861 by emigrants to California, is inappropriate. Forty-Niners, cattle herders, sheep herders, emigrants (and immigrants), freighters, Indians, Military columns, road constructors, and mail contractors all preceded both Butterfield and the Civil War. In fact, these people were far more responsible for developing the route and improving the road than John Butterfield. Additionally, Butterfield was awarded his contract in 1857 and inaugurated service in 1858. I have not seen the latest version of the Butterfield Trail CRMP but recall, in my brief inspection of a draft copy several months ago, that there were many inaccuracies at that time. In fact, far too many for me to assess and rewrite without a considerable expenditure of time, which I did not have. I informally suggested, through Bob Calkins, that a rewrite of the document with a downgrading of material from some sources and with revised incorporation of newer and/or more accurate records be accomplished prior to public review and hearings. I do not know if any of these suggestions have been incorporated.

It has been a considerable time since I corresponded with James R. Wolf, regarding the status of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail route (page H-56), so I am not aware of what agreement, if any, Map 2-11 represents. Obviously, I would favor a route that incorporated areas of my special interests, i.e., the Butterfield Trail, Cooke's Canyon, Fort Cummings, and the 141-5 Mormon Battalion Trail. According to my map interpretation, this could all be accomplished without violating the 50 mile demarcation limit from the actual Continental Divide. It is clear that none of the BLM's alternative positions reflect my desires. Also clear, from an outsiders view, is that southern New Mexico is dragging its feet with respect to resolving this issue. Perhaps this is due to the Forest Service having "the lead" in designating the trail, nevertheless, timely resolution of this issue would seem to beg attention.

This Mimbres Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement has obviously taken many hours and much expertise to prepare, and I do not want to detract from its strategic value. But, in closing it seems to me, and this is obviously a biased viewpoint, that all too often the BLM makes significant use of (and provides subsidy for) resource Archaeologists, within and outside the Bureau for document preparation and site interpretation, while ignoring knowledgeable, competent, area and local Historians intensely familiar with the subject. Both professions lack the resources and abilities to completely and accurately prepare documents of this nature, but, utilized in concert, they could compile material that would more closely represent the whole truth. And, after all, is that not what all of us desire?

Thanks for taking the time and consideration to review my complaints, suggestions, and comments. Again, the referenced document covers a monumental variety of subjects, interests, and geographical areas. A formidable job well done. I offer my comments only in the hopes of providing a small improvement.

Sincerely,

141-4 These corrections have been incorporated into the text.

141-5 See responses to Comments 13-1, 25-2, and 25-11.

142

Nov. 20, 1991

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Dear Sir:

I deem BLM's present involvement in land use in Hidalgo County sufficient governmental involvement and would oppose any further broadening of federal government management of lands in Hidalgo County.

I also oppose any Area of Critical Environmental Concern Designation in Hidalgo County because of their restrictive nature.

Present vehicular management and access has sufficed for many years and more burdensome management is not called for.

Therefore, I favor Alternative A (continuing present management) on all the issues.

Sincerely,

Terrell W. Davis

Terrell W. Davis
HC 65, Box 290
Animas, New Mexico 88020

143

November 27, 1991
1501 Santa Clara
Deming, N.M. 88030

Mr. Tim Salt,
Area Manager
BLM

Dear Sir,

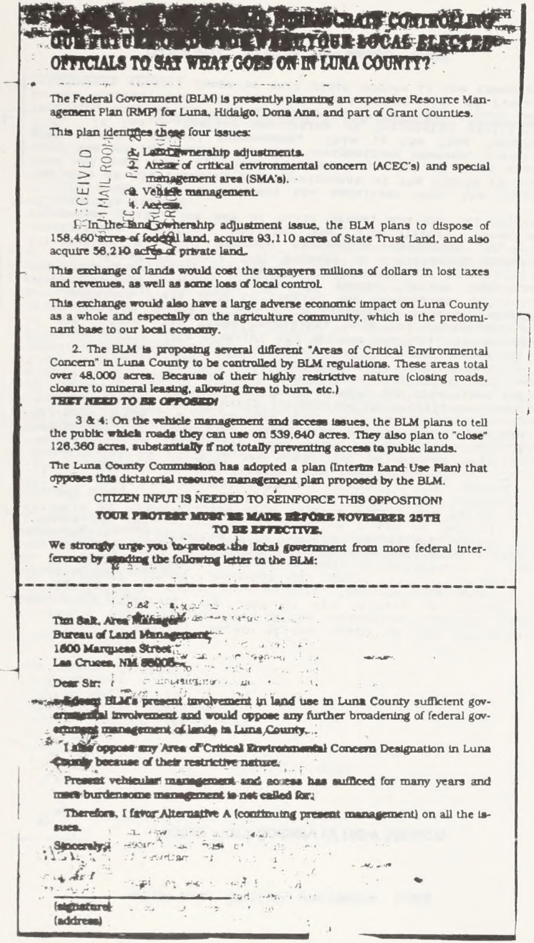
Enclosed is an advertisement that is unsigned. This ad was published Tuesday, Nov 19, 1991 in the Deming Headlight.

One paragraph states the the County Commissioner had adopted a Interim Land use Plan. This ~~statement~~ is true, but the Commissioner stuffed the Land use Plan with cattleman or their hirelings. No citizen input.

I think the BLM is doing a great job. Please keep up the good work.

Thank You,
Bradley Mumford

143



[illegible] BUREAUCRATS CONTROLLING OUR FUTURE [illegible] YOUR LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS TO SAY WHAT GOES ON IN LUNA COUNTY?

RECEIVED
MAIL ROOM

The Federal Government (BLM) is presently planning an expensive Resource Management Plan (RMP) for Luna, Hidalgo, Dona Ana, and part of Grant Counties.

This plan identifies these four issues:

1. Land ownership adjustments.
2. Areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC's) and special management area (SMA's).
3. Vehicle management.
4. Access.

1. In the land ownership adjustment issue, the BLM plans to dispose of 158,460 acres of federal land, acquire 93,110 acres of State Trust Land, and also acquire 56,210 acres of private land.

This exchange of lands would cost the taxpayers millions of dollars in lost taxes and revenues, as well as some loss of local control.

This exchange would also have a large adverse economic impact on Luna County as a whole and especially on the agriculture community, which is the predominant base to our local economy.

2. The BLM is proposing several different "Areas of Critical Environmental Concern" in Luna County to be controlled by BLM regulations. These areas total over 48,000 acres. Because of their highly restrictive nature (closing roads, closure to mineral leasing, allowing fires to burn, etc.)
THEY NEED TO BE OPPOSED!

3 & 4: On the vehicle management and access issues, the BLM plans to tell the public which roads they can use on 539,640 acres. They also plan to "close" 126,360 acres, substantially if not totally preventing access to public lands.

The Luna County Commission has adopted a plan (Interim Land Use Plan) that opposes this dictatorial resource management plan proposed by the BLM.

CITIZEN INPUT IS NEEDED TO REINFORCE THIS OPPOSITION!

YOUR PROTEST MUST BE MADE BEFORE NOVEMBER 25TH
TO BE EFFECTIVE.

We strongly urge you to protect the local government from more federal interference by sending the following letter to the BLM:

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Sir:

[illegible] BLM's present involvement in land use in Luna County sufficient governmental involvement and would oppose any further broadening of federal government management of lands in Luna County.

I also oppose any Area of Critical Environmental Concern Designation in Luna County because of their restrictive nature.

Present vehicular management and access has sufficed for many years and more burdensome management is not called for.

Therefore, I favor Alternative A (continuing present management) on all the issues.

Sincerely,

(signature)
(address)

144

Native Plant Society of New Mexico

November 24, 1991

Mr. Tim Salt
Mimbres Resource Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

The Native Plant Society of New Mexico has over 400 members statewide whose main interest is the protection of native plants and their habitat. As such we are writing in support of Alternative B as stated in the Draft, Resource Management Plan, Environmental Impact Statement of August 1991. Alternative C, the stated preferred alternative would be acceptable; however, we would hope that Alternative B would be considered as a viable alternative. Alternative D is totally unacceptable to us. The reasons for our support of Alternative B are as follows: The withdraw of 110,790 acres from vehicle entry, the withdraw of 109,520 acres from locatable mineral entry, the closure of 576,300 acres to mineral material disposal, the closure of 320,940 acres to mineral leasing, the designation of 30 ACEC's, the proposal to study 4 new areas for wilderness potential, the removal of non-native ibex from the Florida Mountains, Development of watershed management plans for 3 critical watershed areas (We would hope that only native plant species be specified for any riparian restoration projects), the control of vegetation by proper grazing management and prescribed burns (the use of herbicides is indiscriminate and kills many non-target species), the elimination of livestock grazing on 201,420 acres, the management in accordance with prescriptions of 6 riparian ACEC's with riparian and arroyo habitats, the closing of the Rincon, San Diego Mountains, Dona Ana Mountains, and Organ/Franklin Mountains ACEC's to geothermal leasing, closing the Lordsburg Playa ACEC to leasing and development of sodium resources, and closing the Cooke's Range, Florida Mountains, and Organ/Franklin Mountains ACEC's to mining.

As stated in Table S-2, Summary of Anticipated Impacts, Alternative B would enhance vegetation resources by land acquisitions, ACEC's, vehicle use limitations, watershed management plans, 30% use of black grama, and the elimination of livestock grazing.

We would like to commend the excellent work the Bureau has done on the research and development of the ACEC's in this area and hope that all will be approved. One of those areas which was not recommended for ACEC designation; however, deserves some type of special management. This is the Tres Hermanas
144-1 ACEC. It has a healthy population of Ferocactus wislizenii including some of the largest specimens I have personally seen in New Mexico. There is the additional possibility of finding Peniocereus greggii there as this plant occurs in the immediate

PO Box 5917 Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502

144-1 The Tres Hermanas ACEC was considered in Alternative B but is not included in the Proposed Plan. The BLM feels that the Tres Hermanas area can be protected under current management practices as well as others proposed in the RMP under The Proposed Plan. Both species identified in your letter, *Ferocactus wislizenii* and *Periocereus greggii* are not currently on our list of special status species plants. As with all actions taken on public land, a site-specific environmental assessment will be done. With all species of native plants (especially with cacti), the plants are usually salvaged from construction activities for later transplant.

144

Native Plant Society of New Mexico

144-1 (CON'T) area. Perhaps you have found it in this ACEC already. This area should be monitored for any potentially damaging activities that could threaten these plants. We ask that you reconsider your decision and designate the Tres Hermanas as an ACEC in your final plan.

Regarding the other ACEC's we would further recommend that they be withdrawn from mineral leasing as this would of course damage any vegetation that is to be protected. Furthermore we would recommend that cattle be withdrawn from these areas whenever possible as not only grazing, but hoof action is destructive to native plants. Permits for plant or animal collection should only be give to those seeking them for scientific purposes. Seed collection should be allowed under controlled conditions.

As previously stated, We believe Alternative B is the best of those listed for protecting the unique environmental resources of the Mimbres Resource Area.

Sincerely yours,

Theodore B. Hodoba

Theodore B. Hodoba
Conservation Chairman, The Native Plant Society Of New Mexico
and President, The Albuquerque Chapter of the Native Plant
Society of New Mexico
P.O. Box 600
Veguita, NM 87062

PO Box 5917 Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502

John Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Dear Sir,

I believe that BLM's present involvement in land use in Hidalgo County is sufficient governmental involvement and I would oppose any further broadening of federal government management of lands in Hidalgo County.

I also oppose any Area of Critical Environmental Concern Designation in Hidalgo County because of their restrictive nature.

Therefore, I favor Alternative A (continuing present management) on all the issues.

Sincerely,

[illegible]
P.O. Box 464
Animas, N Mex 88020

Joe Crown
Box 558
Virden N, Mex

Dear Mr Salt,

Please be advised that I am in favor of Proposal A. I would like to see Management Plans stay like they are.

Sincerely Your

Joe Crown

147

TIM SALT
BLM
1800 MARQUESS ST.
LAS CRUCES, NM. 88005

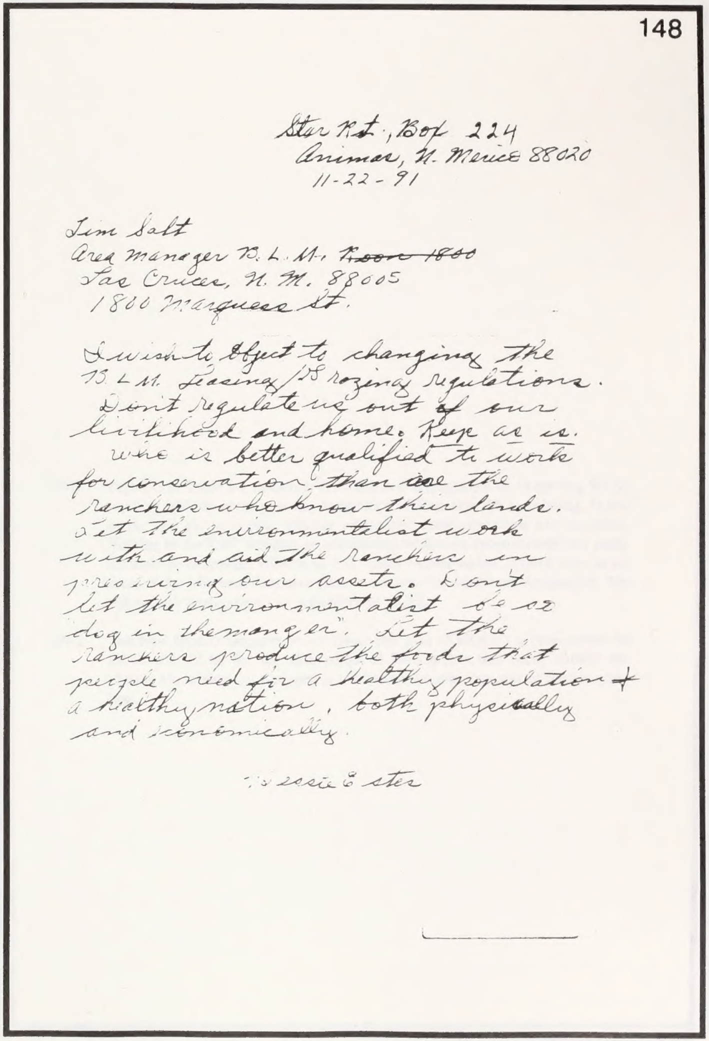
MRS.. DON R. KERR
HC65 BOX 266
ANIMAS NM. 88020

Dear Mr. Salt

I would like to go on record as being against any attempt of the BLM taking over any land from I-10 to the Grey Ranch. I feel this is an infringement on our rights as citizens of the United States and New Mexico we are trying to make a living here and its hard enough without all the environmentalist raising havoc and trying to legally steal our land.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Don R. Kerr

148



Star Rt., Box 224
Animas, N. Mexico 88020
11-22-91

Tim Salt
Area manager B.L.M. ~~Room 1800~~
Las Cruces, N. M. 88005
1800 Marquess St.

I wish to object to changing the B.L.M. leasing/grazing regulations.
Don't regulate us out of our livelihood and home. Keep as is.
Who is better qualified to work for conservation than are the ranchers who know their lands. Let the environmentalist work with and aid the ranchers in preserving our assets. Don't let the environmentalist be a dog in the manger". Let the ranchers produce the foods that people need for a healthy population + a healthy nation, both physically and economically.

Jessie E. Stes

149

NEW MEXICO
Wildlife Legislative Council
P.O. Box 8178, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87198

Member Organizations:

- Albuquerque Desert Divers
- Albuquerque Chapter Quail Unlimited
- Albuquerque Wildlife Federation
- Central New Mexico Audubon Society
- Coalition of Conservation Organizations
- Committee of Wilderness Supporters
- Dona Ana County Humane Society
- Friends of the Gila River
- Forest Guardians
- Four Corners Bowhunters Association
- HawkWatch International
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- Wildlife Rescue, Inc. of New Mexico

Tim Salt - Area Mgr
BLM / Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, NM 88005

RE: Mimbres RMP/EIS

Dear Mr Salt,

We have reviewed the subject draft and provide comments for consideration and response in the final EIS. The comments which follow represent the unanimous position of the W.L.C. member organizations, and we ask that they be made a part of the public record.

ALTERNATIVES

The Wildlife Legislative Council supports alternative "B" rather than the preferred alternative "D".

149

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- The Wilderness Society
- United Bowhunters of New Mexico
- Wildlife Rescue, Inc. of New Mexico

TABLES S1 + S2

wilderness

149-1 Neither table quantifies the acreage recommended for wilderness under any of the four alternatives. Since quantification is provided for other resource parameters, failure to do so for wilderness is an obvious deficiency. Apparently the BLM has chosen to delete WSA's in preference of ACEC's, yet there is no discussion of the change in terminology nor is there any explanation on rationale for doing so.

Wildlife HABITAT

149-2 Removal of ibex from the Floridas (Alt. B) is a questionabe action in view of the tendency of the animals to migrate and the fact that populations exist on

149-1 Page S-3 in Table S-1 mentions the continued management of 14 existing WSAs totalling 390,800 acres plus the designation of four new WSAs totalling 34,480 acres. We did not revisit existing wilderness recommendations and decisions. Nothing in the RMP will change any existing wilderness recommendations made through the Statewide Wilderness EIS, which recommended 239,018 acres in six areas of the Mimbres Resource Area as suitable for wilderness designation. No WSAs have been deleted in preference of ACECs.

149-2 The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) is responsible, by MOU with BLM, for the elimination of Persian ibex that occur outside the Florida Mountains. At the present time, these migrant ibex may be hunted year-long.

149

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149-2 (Con't)

adjacent hills and mountains. The statement leads the reader to believe that there is some benefit to removals from the Floridas but not from other areas now occupied.

Vehicle Management

We are particularly supportive of the proposal in Alt. "B" which would limit most of the Resource Area to access from existing roads and trails designated for that purpose. Uncontrolled access and resulting proliferation of "roads" is already a severe problem and one which can only produce more negative impacts on wildlife, plants, and surface water quality. What is needed is less erosion not more induced by vehicle activity.

149

NEW MEXICO
Wildlife Legislative Council
P.O. Box 8178, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87198

Member Organizations:

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- Wildlife Rescue, Inc. of New Mexico

Chapter 2 - Plan Alternatives

2-25 Animal Damage Control

149-3 One short paragraph devoted to an expensive practice as damaging to wildlife as this one is totally inadaquate. There is no information presented in the document to appraise the reader of the intensity of ADC activities on the Resource area. Information on the number of agents, number of traps or other devices employed and deration of use, number of animals killed (target + non-target), type and quantity of toxicants employed, etc etc. Additionally no percent loss threshold or criteria above which ADC will be initiated is presented. Other BLM Districts use such criteria. Why not the Mimbres? Increasingly ADC is being questioned. The BLM RMP must not assume that "business as as usual" is acceptable and the document (Final EIS) must address the issue substantively.

149-3 See response to Comment 110-4.

149

NEW MEXICO
Wildlife Legislative Council
P.O. Box 8178, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87198

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GRAZING

Under existing range conditions it seems that reductions will be necessary if the proposed objectives for wildlife, arroyo and riparian protection, ACEC's SMA's etc are to be realized. Vehicles are certainly not the only activity or use which must be controlled or eliminated.

CHAPTER 3

3-8 Soil erosion.

149-4 Soil erosion rates can be reduced, whether the agent of transport is wind or water. Little attention is given to the need to reduce erosion. Instead it seems that existing erosion rates are assumed to be a "given" and that they will continue. No attention is given to the potential for reducing soil loss by

149-4 The RMP/EIS discusses reducing soil erosion, developing watershed management plans, and improving water quality (non-point source pollution). The type of necessary treatment(s) will be determined on a case-by-case basis later during site-specific planning and environmental analyses. An MOU between the BLM and New Mexico Environment Department was signed in February 1992. This MOU defines objectives to restore and maintain water quality.

149

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Wildlife Legislative Council
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- Wildlife Rescue, Inc. of New Mexico

149-4 (Con't)

means of a variety of treatments i.e. re-seeding, silt or check dams, land treatment to slow run-off and improve infiltration, elimination of grazing combined with rehabilitation in areas of severe erosion etc etc.

3-9 Surface water quality

149-5

The biggest water quality problem over the whole Resource Area is "soil out of place" (sediment) due to poor watershed condition. The document gives no consideration to the potential for improving water quality through reducing erosion.

149-5 The RMP/EIS discusses reducing soil erosion, watershed management planning, and improving water quality (non-point source pollution), which in the Mimbres Resource Area is primarily impacted by high sediment loads.

149

NEW MEXICO

Wildlife Legislative Council

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- Wildlife Rescue, Inc of New Mexico

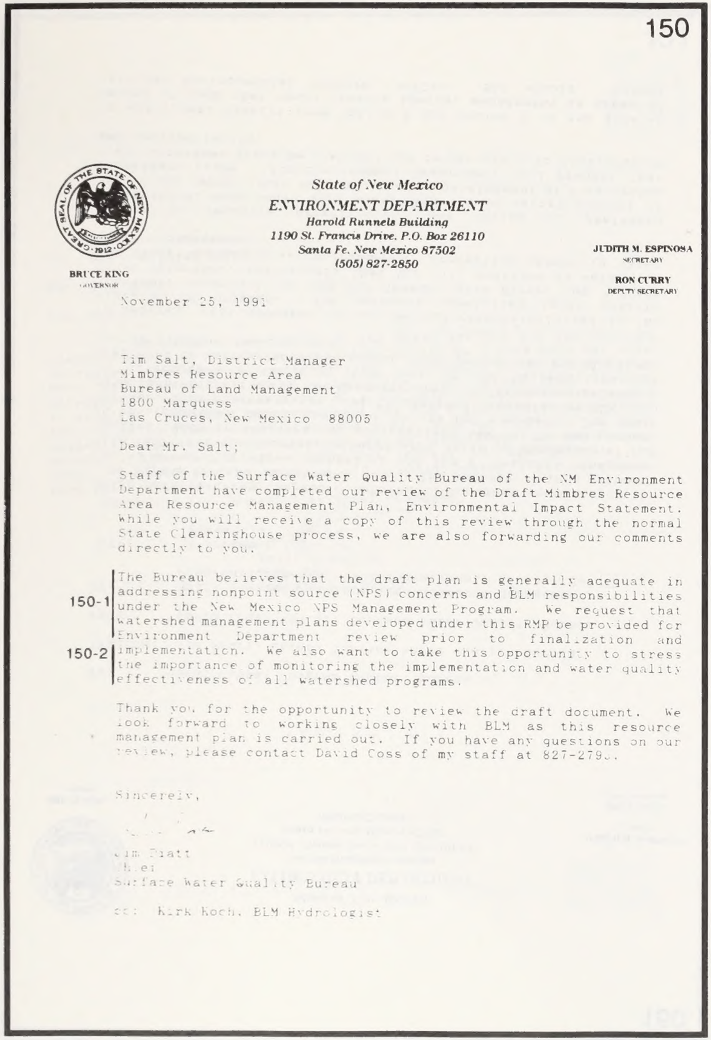
3-19 WILDERNESS

149-6 The 14 designated WSA's total 382,909 acres. The WILDERNESS STUDY E.I.S. includes a conservative 239,018 acres recommended as suitable for wilderness designation, yet none of the alternatives consider the recommended acreage. There is no discussion of how the RMP/EIS relates to the W.S.E.I.S. It would seem that the prior document should be incorporated into the RMP. Instead the RMP/EIS ignores the earlier document and introduces the use of ACEC's in lieu of any substantive discussion of wilderness. This appears to be a clear attempt to subvert the process. This glaring deficiency must be corrected in the final EIS.

LARRY T. CAUDILL
PRESIDENT, WLC
Larry T. Caudill

149-6 See response to Comment 149-1.

150



State of New Mexico
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT
Harold Runnels Building
1190 St. Francis Drive, P.O. Box 26110
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502
(505) 827-2850

BRUCE KING
GOVERNOR

JUDITH M. ESPINOSA
SECRETARY

RON CURRY
DEPUTY SECRETARY

November 25, 1991

Tim Salt, District Manager
Mimbres Resource Area
Bureau of Land Management
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Dear Mr. Salt;

Staff of the Surface Water Quality Bureau of the NM Environment Department have completed our review of the Draft Mimbres Resource Area Resource Management Plan, Environmental Impact Statement. While you will receive a copy of this review through the normal State Clearinghouse process, we are also forwarding our comments directly to you.

150-1 The Bureau believes that the draft plan is generally acequate in addressing nonpoint source (NPS) concerns and BLM responsibilities under the New Mexico NPS Management Program. We request that watershed management plans developed under this RMP be provided for Environment Department review prior to finalization and implementation. 150-2 We also want to take this opportunity to stress the importance of monitoring the implementation and water quality effectiveness of all watershed programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft document. We look forward to working closely with BLM as this resource management plan is carried out. If you have any questions on our review, please contact David Coss of my staff at 827-279[illegible].

Sincerely,

Jim Piatt
Chief
Surface Water Quality Bureau

cc: Kirk Koch, BLM Hydrologist

150-1 Your office will have the opportunity to review and comment on all Watershed Management Plans.

150-2 The Bureau routinely monitors land treatments and other projects to evaluate the effectiveness of these activities in meeting the goals and objectives of the land use plan.

150

State of New Mexico
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT
Harold Runnels Building
1190 St. Francis Drive, P.O. Box 26110
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502
(505) 827-2850

BRUCE KING
GOVERNOR

JUDITH M. ESPINOSA
SECRETARY

RON CURRY
DEPUTY SECRETARY

MEMORANDUM

TO: Gedi Cibas, Program Support Bureau

THROUGH: Jim Piatt, Chief, Surface Water Quality Bureau

FROM: David Coss, WRS II, Surface Water Quality Bureau

RE: Draft Mimbres Resource Area Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement. File = 634 ER

DATE: 25 November 1991

Staff have reviewed the above-referenced document prepared by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The purpose of this document was to present proposed changes to the BLM's Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Mimbres Resource Area which is comprised of BLM managed lands in southern and southwestern New Mexico and present an environmental impact statement on the RMP changes. The draft document does address water quality concerns presented by BLM land management activities in the Resource Area. We recommend selection of Alternative B as being the best of the alternatives for beginning to address nonpoint source (NPS) pollution from BLM lands in the Mimbres Resource Area.

In general, this document recognizes BLM responsibilities in the State's NPS program. The document identifies water quality concerns, especially in the Rio Grande, Gila River, and Mimbres River watershed, and asserts that BLM will continue to work with the State and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in water quality management.

Option B, resource preservation, and Option D, preferred alternative, both would move management toward better control of NPS on BLM lands. Both options call for development of 8 watershed management plans. The Environment Department will request that these watershed plans be provided for review prior to finalization and implementation.

An additional benefit from Option B and Option D is the greater amount of land that would receive special management as areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs). BLM should control

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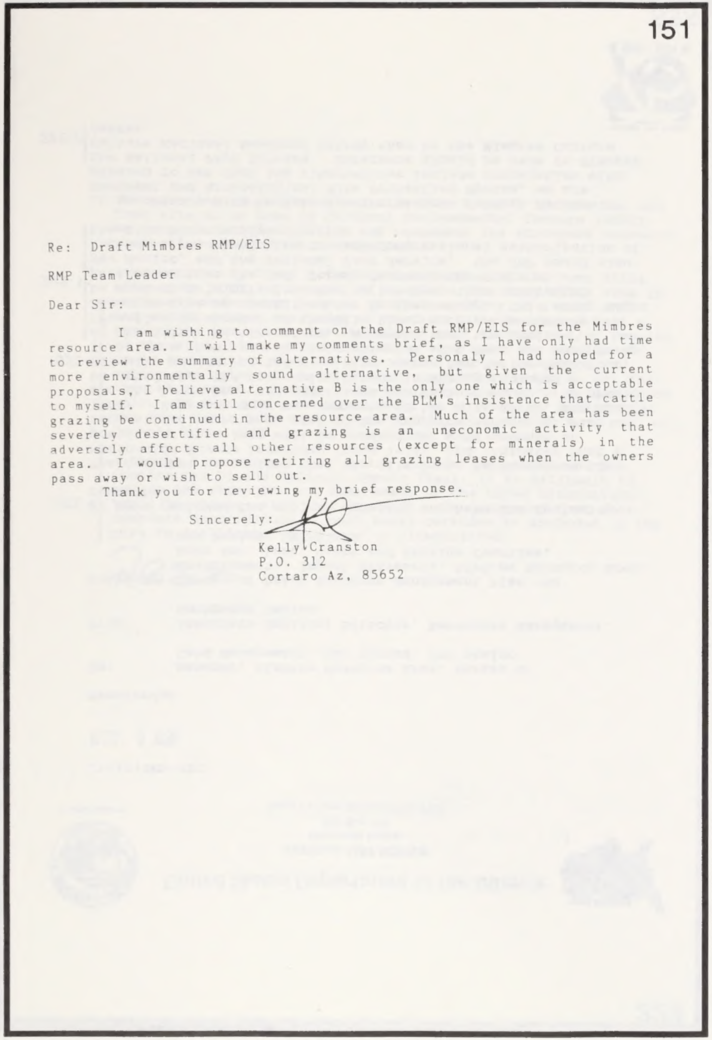
150

MEMORANDUM//Cibas
25 November 1991
Page Two

impacts from off-road vehicles, mining and grazing in all areas identified as being impacted by these activities. BLM should continue and enhance monitoring that will better quantify water quality impacts of these activities.

The Environment Department welcomes the increased emphasis that would be placed on protection of riparian areas under the revised RMP.

Finally, the BLM should ensure that there is adequate monitoring of implementation and effectiveness of NPS controls developed in the watershed management plans.



151

Re: Draft Mimbres RMP/EIS

RMP Team Leader

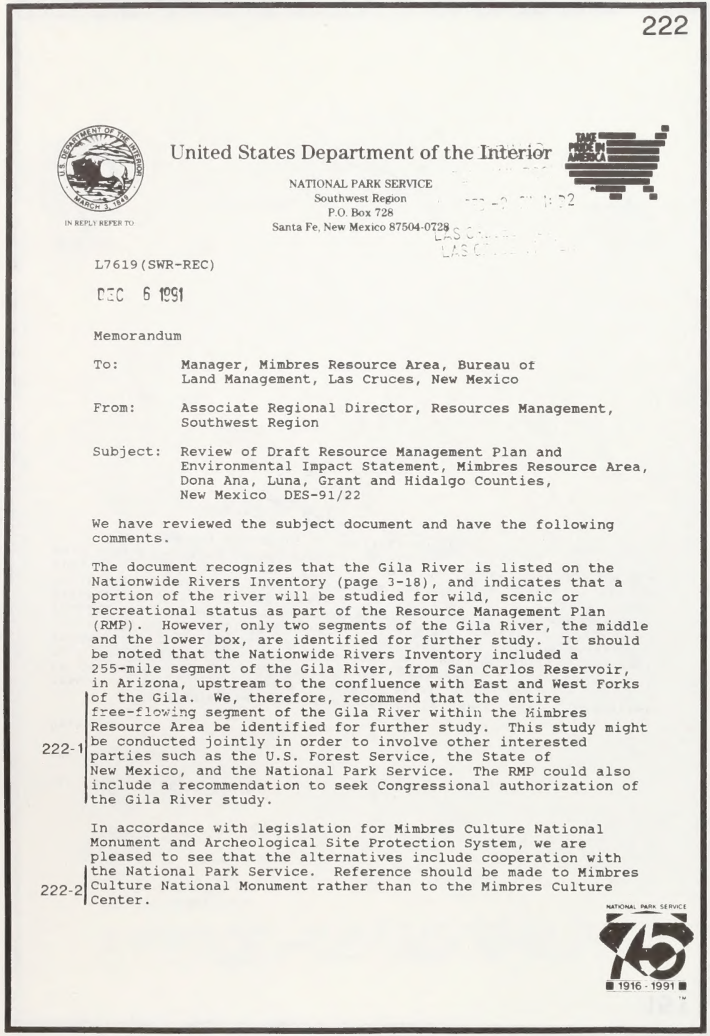
Dear Sir:

I am wishing to comment on the Draft RMP/EIS for the Mimbres resource area. I will make my comments brief, as I have only had time to review the summary of alternatives. Personaly I had hoped for a more environmentally sound alternative, but given the current proposals, I believe alternative B is the only one which is acceptable to myself. I am still concerned over the BLM's insistence that cattle grazing be continued in the resource area. Much of the area has been severely desertified and grazing is an uneconomic activity that adverscly affects all other resources (except for minerals) in the area. I would propose retiring all grazing leases when the owners pass away or wish to sell out.

Thank you for reviewing my brief response.

Sincerely:

Kelly Cranston
P.O. 312
Cortaro Az, 85652



222

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Southwest Region
P.O. Box 728
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504-0728

IN REPLY REFER TO:

L7619(SWR-REC)

DEC 6 1991

Memorandum

To: Manager, Mimbres Resource Area, Bureau of Land Management, Las Cruces, New Mexico

From: Associate Regional Director, Resources Management, Southwest Region

Subject: Review of Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, Mimbres Resource Area, Dona Ana, Luna, Grant and Hidalgo Counties, New Mexico DES-91/22

We have reviewed the subject document and have the following comments.

The document recognizes that the Gila River is listed on the Nationwide Rivers Inventory (page 3-18), and indicates that a portion of the river will be studied for wild, scenic or recreational status as part of the Resource Management Plan (RMP). However, only two segments of the Gila River, the middle and the lower box, are identified for further study. It should be noted that the Nationwide Rivers Inventory included a 255-mile segment of the Gila River, from San Carlos Reservoir, in Arizona, upstream to the confluence with East and West Forks of the Gila. We, therefore, recommend that the entire free-flowing segment of the Gila River within the Mimbres Resource Area be identified for further study. This study might be conducted jointly in order to involve other interested parties such as the U.S. Forest Service, the State of New Mexico, and the National Park Service. The RMP could also include a recommendation to seek Congressional authorization of the Gila River study. 222-1

In accordance with legislation for Mimbres Culture National Monument and Archeological Site Protection System, we are pleased to see that the alternatives include cooperation with the National Park Service. Reference should be made to Mimbres Culture National Monument rather than to the Mimbres Culture Center. 222-2

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE 75 1916 - 1991

222-1 The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act establishes a hierarchy of responsible parties for river studies based on land ownership. While it would probably be more efficient to study the entire Gila River across the Mimbres Resource Area, the BLM determined that the Mimbres RMP would address only those segments of the river that are predominantly on public land. These segments are the Gila Middle Box west of the Gila Forest boundary, and the Gila Lower Box. Since the Redrock and Virden Valleys are almost completely private land, the State of New Mexico should take the lead on any river studies in those sections.

222-2 This change has been made in the Proposed Plan and Final EIS.

222

The plan indicates that Alternatives B, C and D include the Old Town site as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). We support this designation and recommend the strongest resource protection alternative be selected.

Alternatives B, C and D include designation of the Pony Hills site as an ACEC, or as part of an ACEC. The Pony Hills site is seriously endangered because of its proximity to a road and increasing public knowledge of the site. We recommend that a monitoring program be instituted and that closure and/or fencing of the site, along with rerouting of the road, be considered. 222-3 It is our opinion that the site should not be developed for public use unless it is adequately protected, which is not the case at present. Further, use should be limited to guided tours only. If resource protection would be enhanced by designating the Pony Hills site as a separate ACEC, rather than as a part of Cooke's Range ACEC, we recommend that this be done.

222-4 Although Alternatives B, C and D include designation of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, it is difficult to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the three alternative trail locations using only Map 2-11. We recommend that more complete descriptions of each trail corridor be included in the plan to facilitate comparison of alternatives.

R B Smith

222-3 The BLM currently monitors the Pony Hills site through volunteer patrols. The BLM now has a live-in volunteer caretaker stationed at Fort Cummings. Part of the volunteer's duties are to maintain daily patrols of the Pony Hills site.

The BLM considered but rejected the idea of constructing a protective exclosure fence around the Pony Hills site. The site is within a Visual Resource Management Class II area, and a fence would be a visual intrusion. Also, a protective fence would interfere with the aesthetics of the archaeological site. The BLM feels that intensive monitoring of the site will offer it adequate protection in the near future. Future developments related to the proposed Mimbres Culture National Monument might justify the installation of a live-in volunteer caretaker facility adjacent to the site dedicated to protecting the site. A live-in caretaker would also make numerous visitor contacts and educate the public to the value of preserving the site.

Re-routing the existing County road near the Pony Hills site would not necessarily offer the site greater protection. Sites in very remote locales are also subjected to intensive vandalism. The BLM feels that increased monitoring and BLM presence is the key to preserving the site.

The BLM agrees that past efforts at protecting the site have not been adequate. Designation of the site as an ACEC will offer the site significant additional protection. The BLM will not encourage increased public visitation prior to establishing sufficient on-site presence.

The BLM agrees that only guided tours to the Pony Hills site will be allowed. All individual tour guides must be approved in advance by BLM.

222-4 See response to Comment 13-1.

223

State of New Mexico
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT
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1190 St. Francis Drive, P.O. Box 26110
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502
(505) 827-2850

BRUCE KING
GOVERNOR

JUDITH M. ESPINOSA
SECRETARY

RON CURRY
DEPUTY SECRETARY

December 4, 1991

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marques
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

The following is provided in response to your request for review and comment of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Draft Mimbres Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, August 1991.

We recommend selection of Alternative B as the best option for beginning to address nonpoint source (NPS) pollution from BLM lands in the Mimbres Resource Area. We are pleased that this document recognizes BLM's responsibilities in the State's NPS program. The document identifies water quality concerns, especially in the Rio Grande, Gila River, and Mimbres River watershed, and asserts that BLM will continue to work with the State and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in water quality management.

Notably, options B (resource preservation) and D (preferred alternative) would move management toward better control of NPS on BLM lands. Both options call for development of eight watershed management plans. The Environmental Department will request that these watershed plans be provided for review prior to finalization and implementation. 223-1

An additional benefit from these two options is the greater amount of land that would receive special management as areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC's). BLM should control impacts from off-road vehicles, mining and grazing in all areas identified as being impacted by theses activities. BLM should continue and enhance monitoring that will better qualify water quality impacts of these activities.

223-1 See response to Comment 150-1.

223

Tim Salt, Area Manager
Page 2
December 4, 1991

The Environment Department welcomes the increased emphasis that would be placed on protection of riparian areas under the revised RMP.

223-2 Finally, the BLM should insure that there is adequate monitoring of implementation and effectiveness of NPS controls developed in the watershed management plans.

Sincerely,

Judith M Espinosa

Judith M. Espinosa
Secretary

cc: Gedi Cibas

223-2 See response to Comment 150-2.

224

NEW MEXICO ECOL. SERV. OFFICE

USFWS AFO
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United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Post Office Box 1306
Albuquerque, N.M. 87103

TAKE PRIDE IN AMERICA

12.9.91 Fowlor-Props
Donahoo
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A. Culli
B. Culli
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In Reply Refer To:
Region 2/FWE/HC

DEC 4 1991

MEMORANDUM

To: State Director, Bureau of Land Management, Santa Fe, New Mexico

From: Regional Director, Region 2

Subject: Draft Mimbres Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

We have reviewed the subject draft document and have the following comments. The purpose of the draft Mimbres Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) is to identify and analyze future options for managing 3,053,820 acres of public land and 4,126,780 acres of Federal mineral estate administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). These lands, the Mimbres Resource Area, are located in Dona Ana, Luna, Hidalgo, and Grant Counties, New Mexico. The RMP/EIS will provide a comprehensive framework for management and allocation of public land resources for the next 20 years within the area. Key resource management issues identified within the draft RMP/EIS include:

- Land Ownership Adjustments
- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) and Special Management Areas (SMA's)
- Vehicle Management
- Access

Resolution of various issues and concerns is necessitated by increased demands being placed upon public land and resources by the rapidly expanding population of Las Cruces, New Mexico, and El Paso, Texas. Four alternatives are presented. Each describes a different management option for blending and balancing resource allocations with available resources. Specific projects for a given area or resource will be described in future activity plans which will be much more detailed. The four alternatives include: Alternative A, continuation of current management (no action); Alternative B, resource preservation alternative; Alternative C, resource production alternative; and Alternative D, resource conservation (preferred) alternative.

We have restricted our comments on the draft RMP/EIS to the actions which would occur under Alternative D, the preferred alternative. We also find Alternative D to be the alternative which best provides for fish and wildlife resources including federally listed threatened and endangered species.

A list of Federal threatened and endangered plant and animal species which may occur in the area covered by the draft RMP/EIS was provided to BLM on May 1, 1991. In response to the species list, BLM prepared a biological assessment which described the threatened, endangered, and candidate species from the May 1, 1991, list and discussed the effects implementation of the various alternatives would have upon those species. BLM found that the action would have no affect upon the beautiful shiner (Notropis formosus), Gila topminnow (Poeciliopsis occidentalis occidentalis), Gila trout (Oncorhynchus gilae), loach minnow (Tiaroga cobitis), Chihuahua chub (Gila nigrescens), spikedace (Meda fulgida), aplomado falcon (Falco femoralis septentrionalis), bald eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus), whooping crane (Grus americana), Mexican gray wolf (Canis lupus baileyi), Mexican long-nosed bat (Leptonycteris nivalis), Sanborn's long-nosed bat (Leptonycteris sanborni), Sneed pincushion cactus (Coryphantha sneedii var. sneedii), and Todsen's pennyroyal

224

(Hedeoma todsenii). They also found that the action could result in a "may affect" situation for the peregrine falcon (Falco peregrinus anatum).

The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) agrees with the findings of BLM regarding impacts of the action upon threatened and endangered species. We also applaud BLM's efforts to consider impacts of the action upon 51 Federal candidate species and 46 state listed, or sensitive, species.

The "may affect" finding for the peregrine falcon is based upon potential mining activity for which BLM has no discretionary authority. Should this activity go forward, the Service requests that formal consultation be initiated so we may determine if the action will result in taking of an endangered species.

The Draft RMP/EIS and the Biological Assessment both state that "Specific projects for a given area or resource will be detailed in future activity plans." The Service will consult on the various projects after BLM has developed detailed plans concerning their design.

224-1 The plan is not specific in describing how implementation of the preferred alternative will prevent populations of candidate threatened or endangered species from declining. Nowhere in the document is it stated that BLM would monitor populations of these species to determine their status on BLM lands, or the impacts of various actions upon these species. While it is stated in the Biological Assessment that it is BLM policy (Manual 6840) to give priority to protection and management of habitat for known populations of both state and federally listed species, to prevent listing of Federal candidates, and to assist in the recovery of listed species, it is not clearly explained in the document how BLM will accomplish this. Delineation of an area as a ACEC or SMA will not improve the status of listed species, provide the information needed to determine the status of candidate species, or assist in recovery of a listed species, unless a monitoring program is implemented to document the results of the activity. For example, the BLM should, in the Plan, consider reintroduction of the beautiful shiner and aplomado falcon into suitable habitats within the Mimbres Resource Area.

224-2 The Service is also concerned about the impact chemical "brush" control could have upon fish and wildlife resources. We see this activity as being directed toward improvement of livestock forage production with only minimal concern being given to the impacts it could have upon wildlife resources.

224-3 One of the unique ecosystems found within the Mimbres Resource Area is the vast expanses of yucca desert grassland. Because of their uniqueness, and because they represent a mere remnant of what occurred in this area in the past, every effort should be made to maintain and protect these biodiverse areas of public lands. With proper management these lands could once again support an abundance of pronghorn antelope, prairie dogs, white-sided jackrabbits, and a myriad of other species which need this type of habitat to survive.

We thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Mimbres RMP/EIS. If we can be of further assistance, please call Jerry Burton at (505) 883-7877 or FTS 474-7877.

cc:
Director, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, Santa Fe, New Mexico
Director, New Mexico Energy, Mineral and Natural Resources Department, Santa Fe, New Mexico
Field Supervisor, Ecological Services, FWS, Albuquerque, New Mexico

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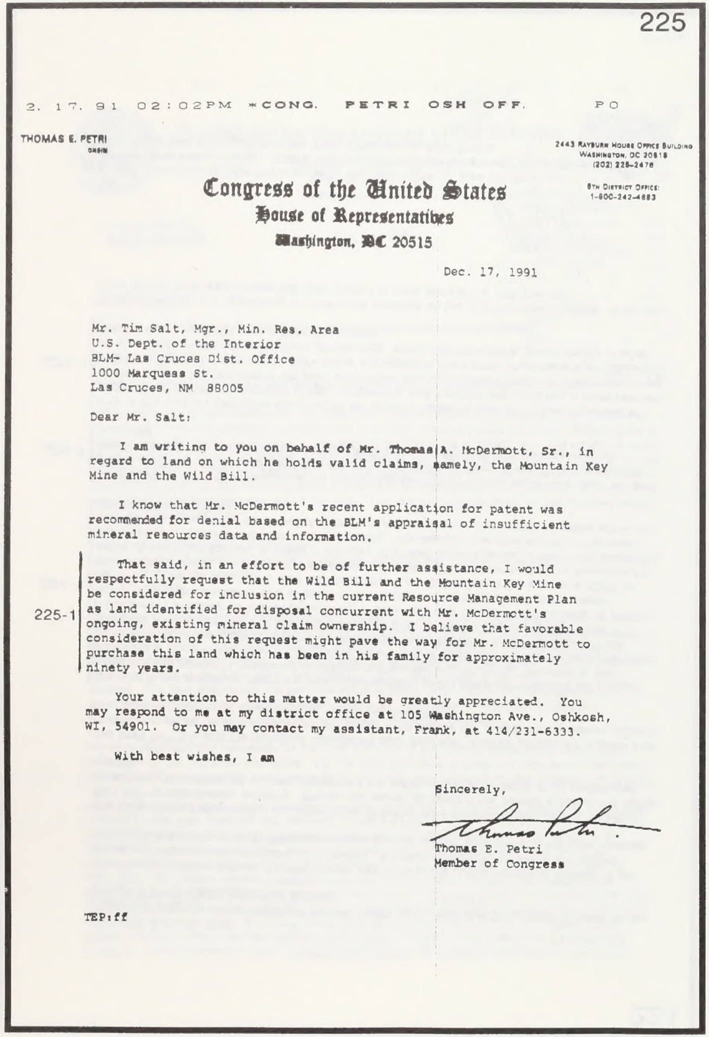
224-1 Pages 4-43 through 4-46 (Draft RMP/EIS) describe the environmental consequences of the proposed actions. The RMP proposes numerous actions which would protect, enhance, and improve habitat for special status species. Page 2-34 of this document describes the BLM policy for special status species. This policy includes of this document monitoring and inventory. This section also describes BLM's responsibilities as they relate to recovery of listed species and prevention of listing. While delineation of an area as an ACEC or SMA would not immediately improve the status of listed species or candidate species, it would provide an immediate critical first step for the protection of these species and their habitat. Without protected habitat, recovery of a threatened and endangered species would not be possible. Monitoring of special status species is an on-going function of the Resource Area. At the present time, the Resource Area is involved with the monitoring of eight special status species. While the plan does not address specific re-introduction projects, the BLM is committed to this program. BLM has and will continue to participate in the development and implementation of site-specific habitat management plans and recovery plans. The Mimbres River (former habitat for the beautiful shiner) does not flow through BLM-administered public land. The aplomado falcon is not known to occur on BLM-administered public land.

224-2 Most chemical brush controls are proposed as part of Allotment Management Plans (AMPs). Each brush control is reviewed by the wildlife biologist and other resource specialists. The brush controls are never implemented without considering all possible affects on the natural resources. The Resource Area has strict guidelines concerning application procedures for chemical herbicides. Conversion of brush communities, usually creosotebush, may improve habitat for wildlife by increasing feed, improving habitat diversity, reducing erosion, and improving watershed conditions. Chemical brush control projects have been implemented specifically for wildlife within the District. Also, see response to Comment 48-1.

224-3 The RMP proposes, through grazing management, brush control, and other protective measures, to restore lands to their previous vegetation cover, which should include what you refer to as yucca desert grassland.

225



2. 17. 91 02:02PM *CONG. PETRI OSH OFF. PO

THOMAS E. PETRI
[illegible]

2443 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-2476

8th District Office:
1-800-242-4883

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dec. 17, 1991

Mr. Tim Salt, Mgr., Min. Res. Area
U.S. Dept. of the Interior
BLM- Las Cruces Dist. Office
1000 Marquess St.
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

I am writing to you on behalf of Mr. Thomas A. McDermott, Sr., in regard to land on which he holds valid claims, namely, the Mountain Key Mine and the Wild Bill.

I know that Mr. McDermott's recent application for patent was recommended for denial based on the BLM's appraisal of insufficient mineral resources data and information.

225-1 That said, in an effort to be of further assistance, I would respectfully request that the Wild Bill and the Mountain Key Mine be considered for inclusion in the current Resource Management Plan as land identified for disposal concurrent with Mr. McDermott's ongoing, existing mineral claim ownership. I believe that favorable consideration of this request might pave the way for Mr. McDermott to purchase this land which has been in his family for approximately ninety years.

Your attention to this matter would be greatly appreciated. You may respond to me at my district office at 105 Washington Ave., Oshkosh, WI, 54901. Or you may contact my assistant, Frank, at 414/231-6333.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Thomas Petri

Thomas E. Petri
Member of Congress

TEP:ff

225-1 Under the Proposed Plan, the subject land is within a retention area because it is contiguous with the Gila National Forest. Lands within a retention area cannot be disposed of by sale; however, the language in the RMP allows for disposal through exchange in order to consolidate lands within these areas. Therefore, we would consider an exchange proposal from Mr. McDermott if the land he offers is within a retention area (conversely not within an area where public land has been identified for disposal in the RMP).

The Mimbres RMP is scheduled for completion in mid to late 1993. We would not be able to initiate an exchange before then, but we would welcome further discussion with Mr. McDermott on exchange possibilities prior to that time.

GOVERNOR
Bruce King

DEPARTMENT OF GAME & FISH
STATE OF NEW MEXICO
Villagra Building Santa Fe, NM 87503

DIRECTOR AND SECRETARY
TO THE COMMISSION
Bill Montoya

STATE GAME COMMISSION
JAMES H. [illegible] CHAIRMAN
SANTA FE
THOMAS P. [illegible] VICE CHAIRMAN
ALBUQUERQUE
[illegible]
ALBUQUERQUE
[illegible]
MESILLA PARK
DAVID M. [illegible]
LA CUEVA
ANDREA MAES CHAVEZ
NAVAJO DAM

December 19, 1991

Mr. Tim Salt, Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Mimbres Resource Area
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

Dear Mr. Salt:

The Department of Game and Fish (Department) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Mimbres Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We recognize that the deadline for comment has expired, however, we submit these comments in hope they may still be considered during your process of finalizing the RMP/EIS.

Our comments will focus on the desert bighorn sheep (Ovis canadensis mexicana), the rarest indigenous large mammal in New Mexico. In 1991 an estimated 155 free-ranging desert bighorn occurred in the Peloncillo (n=50), Hatchet (n=65), Alamo Hueco (n=15), and San Andres mountains (n=25). The species is state-endangered, except in the Peloncillo Mountains, and all areas are managed by the BLM except the San Andres.

The Department generally agrees with the management opportunities identified in the preferred alternative D with some exceptions and modifications. Alternative D proposes balanced resource use by incorporating features of the other alternatives. The BLM is to be commended for recommending 27 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), a designation that will help conserve and enhance the wildlife of New Mexico.

226-1 The desert bighorn did not receive the necessary emphasis in the Mimbres RMP/EIS, apparently because the Review Team failed to reference the Rangewide Plan for Managing Habitat of Desert Bighorn Sheep on Public Lands. Instead, the Review Team relied heavily on Dunmire's 1990 report, which emphasized biotic communities and some special interest species to the exclusion of desert bighorn sheep habitat. For example, the Little Hatchets, occupied bighorn range, were not considered for ACEC

226-1 Management of desert bighorn sheep populations in the Mimbres Resource Area is discussed in the Continuing Management Guidance on page 2-26. In addition, BLM policy for the management and protection of special status species is outlined in the Continuing Management Guidance on page 2-34. The Proposed Plan identifies additional area for the reintroduction of desert bighorn sheep, specifically the Organ Mountains. Most desert bighorn sheep habitat is included within proposed ACECs. The areas not included such as the Little Hatchet Mountains and portions of the Peloncillo Mountains are in existing HMPs specifically developed for the desert bighorn sheep. We feel that these existing HMPs afford adequate habitat protection outside of the proposed ACECs.

226

226-1 (Con't) status, protection for the Peloncillo Mountains is fragmented into 5 proposed ACECs that exclude critical occupied range and travel corridors, and a clear picture of the cumulative impacts of mining, road access, and recreational trails was not presented.

226-2 Additionally, the RMP/EIS emphasized protection of mountainous habitats and excluded consideration of intermountain areas. Intermountain areas must be protected to allow unimpeded movement of desert bighorn sheep among ranges to facilitate gene flow and use of alternate habitat in the event of localized drought or habitat alteration. The desert bighorn sheep inhabiting the boothill region are a metapopulation, linked by movement and gene flow. Without a broad conservation strategy that includes intermountain areas, local populations will likely go extinct in isolated fragments of habitat. The Department looks forward to working with the BLM to address problems associated with desert bighorn sheep management on public lands.

ISSUES

Access

226-3 The Department is concerned over potential impacts resulting from unrestricted public access to the proposed ACECs occupied by desert bighorn sheep (i.e., Alamo Hueco, Antelope Pass, Big Hatchet, Central Peloncillo, and Granite Gap), and some specific non-ACEC areas (Little Hatchet and Animas mountains). We strongly recommend against development of parking areas in the Alamo Hueco Mountains and developing a road from State Road 9 to the north end of the Animas Mountains. The north end of the Animas Mountains provide a travel corridor for desert bighorn sheep crossing from the Peloncillo to the Hatchet mountains. Additionally, the Animas Mountains are a potential desert bighorn transplant site.

226-4 Potential impacts resulting from construction of the Continental Divide Trail, trailheads, and parking areas as proposed in Alternatives B, C, and D are of particular concern. Alternate B would dissect the Animas Mountains, thus making this area unsuitable as a transplant site; Alternative C would fragment bighorn habitat in the Peloncillos; and preferred Alternative D, the most damaging location for the trail would dissect the main mass of the Alamo Hueco, Big Hatchet, and Little Hatchet mountains which are occupied by 84% of the free-ranging desert bighorn in the state. These desert bighorn ranges were identified by the BLM in 1988 as Category I areas, which require that habitat be maintained or enhanced (emphasis added).

226-5 The anticipated impact of public vehicular and foot access on wildlife was not adequately addressed in the RMP/EIS. The only anticipated impact stated was surface disturbance (p. 4-115) and there was no discussion of the impact of the Continental Divide Trail on wildlife.

226-2 Not all public land requires ACEC designation for the protection and enhancement of wildlife habitat. Most intermountain regions in the bootheel of New Mexico are not on public land. Those that are, such as the areas which separate the Little Hatchet, Big Hatchet, and Alamo Hueco Mountains are included in existing HMPs. We feel that these existing HMPs afford adequate management opportunities for bighorn sheep habitat outside of the proposed ACECs.

226-3 Public access to or within ACECs or other special management areas will not be unrestricted. Development of access would involve providing opportunities for hiking rather than vehicle use. Parking areas would be located at or near the boundaries of these areas. In most cases, except for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, there would be no marked or developed trails. We do not anticipate that there will be a significant amount of visitor use in these areas as a result.

In all cases, development of access will be subject to a site-specific environmental assessment (EA).

226-4 The RMP shows potential designated corridors for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail; an actual trail will not be built. The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail will consist only of a marked route within the corridor. The actual number of potential hikers will probably be less than the number of deer, javelina, and quail hunters which presently use most of the same areas.

226-5 See responses to Comments 226-3 and 226-4.

226-6 Research has indicated that public road access and major trail systems fragment habitat and bring people into areas that they would not normally enter. Human activities and associated influences (dogs, harassment, poaching) frequently displace, stress, or kill desert bighorn. Providing public access may facilitate entry for people that already use these lands, but with the exception of the Granite Gap ACEC, these areas now receive very little public use. Developing access would only encourage use. Anticipating future public demands may be expedient, but should not be planned to the exclusion of other resource considerations. It is important to remember that the only desert bighorn populations that survived into the 20th century, the Hatchet and San Andres, occurred in areas inaccessible to the general public.

Minerals

226-7 The Department supports the proposed closure to mineral material sales and fluid mineral leasing in Alternative D and recommend that locatable mineral entry be withdrawn from ACECs occupied by desert bighorn (Alamo Hueco, Antelope Pass, Big Hatchet, Central Peloncillo, and Granite Gap). Mining impacts desert bighorn by opening up roads and trails, which brings people into otherwise undisturbed habitat (see "Access").

Wildlife Habitat

226-8 The Peloncillo (1984) and Hatchet/Alamo Hueco (1983) HMPs require revision before they are incorporated within ACECs. Population goals, in particular, are unrealistic (p. 2-25, 2-69). Based on analysis of population trends, weather data, and area of suitable habitat, the Department projects 175 bighorn in the Hatchet/Alamo Hueco complex and 125 bighorn in the Peloncillo Mountains assuming wet weather years; significant range improvement in the Little Hatchet, Alamo Hueco, and Peloncillo mountains; and protective actions under ACEC or wilderness designation.

Vegetation

226-9 The Department recommends against the use of chemical brush control as proposed in Alternative D except in areas dominated by creosote. We recommend further controlled research to determine if brush control significantly improves wildlife habitat diversity and forage quantity as purported (p. 4-116). For example, preliminary data from the Roswell area in shinnery oak habitat indicated that lizard abundance decreased three to four-fold in herbicide treated areas.

226-10 We further recommend that long-term research be conducted to determine effects of prescribed burns in desert environments, since fire may only temporarily increase forage quantity and quality. For example, a 3000 acre burn in the Peloncillo

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226-6 See responses to Comments 226-3 and 226-4.

226-7 See responses to Comments 29-4 and 29-5.

226-8 The existing HMPs can be revised at any time. The population goals for bighorn sheep were based on the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish population goals for these areas when the HMPs were initially developed.

226-9 See responses to Comments 29-4 and 29-5.

226-10 Prescribed burns will not be proposed where there will be no potential benefit. Prescribed burns are not limited to projects where visibility for desert bighorn sheep may be a problem. Prescribed burns are implemented to improve vegetative diversity and provide a more natural vegetative community. The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish has had, and will continue to have, the opportunity to review and comment on projects which may affect wildlife and wildlife habitat.

226-10 (Con't) Mountains attracted desert bighorn sheep and Coues white-tailed deer (Odocoileus virginianus cousei) the following year, but use declined in succeeding years. Prescribed burns may open visibility for desert bighorn, but may be counterproductive unless open habitat is limited.

WILDERNESS/ACEC COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDED MODIFICATIONS

Gray Peak Wilderness Inventory Unit

The Department strongly supports the proposal to study the Gray Peak unit for wilderness potential. This unit comprises critical habitat for threatened and endangered state- and federally-listed species, and other wildlife that are limited in number and distribution in the state (e.g., desert bighorn sheep, desert mule deer (O. hemionus crooki), Coues white-tailed deer, coati (Nasua nasua), and javelina (Dicotyles tajacu).

Alamo Hueco ACEC

The plan to write a grazing activity plan, needed to address periodic heavy cattle grazing in the Alamo Huecos, is commendable. We believe that poor forage conditions due to cattle overgrazing following the 1989 drought caused desert bighorn reproduction failures in 1989-91 and precipitated bighorn movement to the Hatchet Mountains. This population has declined to 15 bighorn in 1991, from 30 between 1986-89.

Antelope Pass ACEC

226-11 The proposed ACEC boundaries may protect the diverse lizard fauna, but do not encompass adequate desert bighorn sheep habitat. We strongly recommend that the boundaries be expanded by 1,920 acres (T27S, R20W Sec. 1, 2, 3) in order to include the entire Pratt Peak complex, a critical bighorn lambing and rearing area.

Apache Box ACEC

226-12 We recommend that all activities be scheduled outside of the sensitive period for raptors (February 1-August 15); hiking trails not be developed; and grazing be excluded from this "nearly pristine riparian area".

Big Hatchet Mountains ACEC

226-13 The acquisition of public access to the north and west sides of the Big Hatchet Mountains is of particular concern because this would provide access to important bighorn use areas (public access is added for east side on p. 2-64). One of the reasons this population recovered from approximately 20 individuals in the 1970's has been the lack of human disturbance. Since the

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226-11 See responses to Comments 226-1 and 226-2.

226-12 In January 1990, a closure of public land was published in the Federal Register. Access to the public is blocked and a firearm restriction is in effect from February 1 through August 15. Our initial closure notice was to include a firearm restriction for the entire year, but the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish requested the area remain open during hunting seasons. Mineral activities continue, but the claimant has scheduled operations for the period between August 15 and January 31. The Safford District of the BLM administers the grazing program in the area. The ACEC management prescriptions address protection of riparian values through grazing management.

226-13 See responses to Comments 226-3 and 226-4.

RMP/EIS repeatedly emphasizes the importance of Hatchet bighorn, they should be given clear priority over recreation.

226-14 We strongly recommend that the Little Hatchet Mountains between Hatchet Gap and Hatchita Peak (15,680 acres) be incorporated into the Big Hatchet ACEC (T29S, R16W W 1/2 of sec. 1, sec. 2, 3, E 1/2 sec. 4, E 1/2 sec. 9, sec. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 34, 35, 36; T28S, R16W sec. 25, 26, 27, 34, 35, and 36). The Little and Big Hatchet bighorn comprise one population: bighorn move between both ranges and the Little Hatchet bighorn comprise one third of the Big Hatchet population. The Little Hatchets warrant ACEC designation based on identification as a Category I area (BLM 1989) and needed protection against heavy livestock grazing and mining activity. The Department also opposes public access to the north end (p. 2-65).

Central Peloncillo Mountains ACEC

The need for prescribed burns (implicit in the planned action for a burn plan) requires research (see "Vegetation" section).

226-15 The Department is concern with public access to Owl Canyon, an important bighorn use area (see "Access" section"). The exclusion of livestock from Owl and Post Office canyon allotments will require extensive fencing, but fences can be a significant mortality source even when constructed according to bighorn sheep specifications. Rather than fencing, we recommend that Category I allotment objectives and actions be stringently implemented in adjacent allotments.

226-16 Only part of the proposed Gray Peak Wilderness Study Area is encompassed within the boundaries of this ACEC; i.e., from Burro Pass to Post Office Canyon. The Department recommends inclusion of the remainder of the Gray Peak unit; i.e, from Antelope Pass to Burro Canyon. This 9,000 acre unit encompasses critical desert bighorn habitat in Willy Wright Canyon, Gray Peak, and Spencer Ridge. Due to a long history of overgrazing and woodcutting, this unit requires management attention and could improve dramatically with ACEC designation.

Granite Gap ACEC

226-17 The proposed ACEC boundaries provide only partial protection for the Granite Peak bighorn population. We strongly recommend that the boundaries be expanded by 4,960 acres to include Granite Gap Mountain, which bighorn use to cross State Road 80, and Blue Mountain, a recently colonized bighorn use area (T25S R21W N. 1/2 of sec. 3 and T25S R21W SW 1/4 sec. 2, sec. 10, W 1/2 sec. 11, sec. 13, 14, N 1/2 sec. 22, sec. 23 and 24, E 1/2 sec. 26, and S 1/2 sec. 35).

226-14 See responses to Comments 226-1 and 226-2.

226-15 The Owl Canyon fence is a condition of the exchange agreement between the BLM and The Nature Conservancy. The fence will be built to BLM's bighorn sheep fence specifications which, to the best of our knowledge, have not resulted in any sheep fatalities.

Also see responses to Comments 226-3 and 226-4.

226-16 ACECs and WSAs are designated for different reasons and the values of each do not always overlap. We do not feel that the portion of the Gray Peak WSA north of the proposed ACEC boundary meets the relevance/importance criteria for ACEC designation. This is the reason for the difference in boundaries between the two. Also, see responses to Comments 226-1 and 226-2.

226-17 See responses to Comments 226-1 and 226-2.

Organ Mountains ACEC

226-18 In your reply to our letter recommending changes to recreational projects proposed in the 1989 Organ Mountains HMP, the BLM stated that these projects may be modified after completion of the desert bighorn habitat evaluation. This report has been completed and supports the following recommendations to minimize disturbance and thus facilitate future desert bighorn transplants: (a) do not construct the Fillmore Canyon trail to avoid fragmenting limited bighorn habitat; (b) limit access to the Organ Needles by mountain climbers to 1 designated route; (c) move the Mine House and North-South trails a minimum of 0.5 km west of their proposed route; (d) prohibit off-trail activity; and (e) prohibit dogs on the west side of the mountain.

Miscellaneous Comments

226-19 P. 2-62: Appendix H-1 does not contain a map for each ACEC as stated. Please provide topographic maps in the final draft.

226-20 P. 2-70, paragraph 8 and p. 4-125, paragraph 5: Livestock have been excluded from the Red Rock Wildlife Area since 1989.

226-21 P.H-40 paragraph 1 and p. I-9, paragraph 2: The desert bighorn sheep in the Peloncillo Mountains were delisted as state-endangered in January 1988.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the Mimbres RMP/EIS. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Amy Fisher (827-9913) or Robert Jenks (827-7882) of this Department.

Sincerely,

Bill Montoya
Director

BM/AF/mlm

xc: Jennifer Fowler-Propst (Ecological Services Supervisor, USFWS)
Wain Evans (Assistant Director, NMGF)
Dan Sutcliffe (Division of Wildlife Chief, NMGF)
Andrew Sandoval (HEL Division Chief, NMGF)
Craig Nordyke (SW Area Supervisor, NMGF)
Robert Jenks (HEL Division Assistant Chief, NMGF)
Amy Fisher (Biologist, NMGF)

226-18 A designated route to the Organ Needles would involve a trail at least part way up Fillmore Canyon. There is currently an established hiking trail up lower Fillmore Canyon from La Cueva to near the Modoc millsite. Hikers have created a well-established "social trail" the rest of the way up Fillmore Canyon to reach The Needles and Organ Peak. A trail cannot be constructed until an agreement is reached with the Army at Fort Bliss. If a trail was constructed, it would be routed to avoid riparian areas which are presently being impacted. We also feel that the trail can be routed to avoid potential bighorn sheep habitat. We do not feel that there would be a significant increase in visitor use over present levels if the trail was constructed.

Relocation of the Minehouse and North-South (Dusty) Trails will be considered as the survey and design for these trails is completed. We do not foresee any problem with this. The Dusty Trail will most likely utilize existing roads and trails to the extent possible.

Off-trail hiking is currently prohibited or discouraged in sensitive portions of the Organs. We do not have the capability nor do we see a need to further restrict these activities. The number of off-trail hikers that would interfere with sheep use is very low.

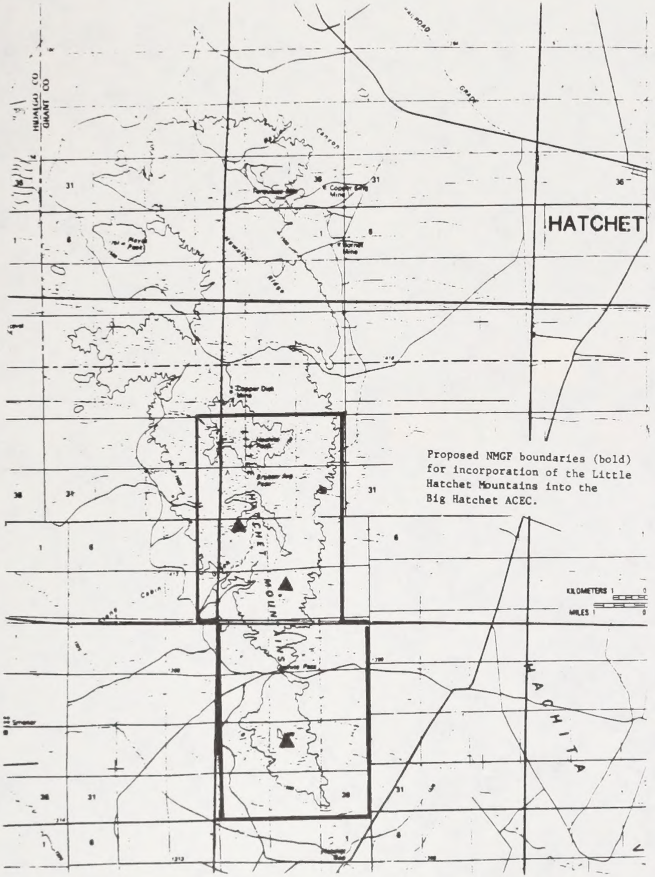
Dogs are required to be on a leash within designated recreation sites and on designated trails.

226-19 See response to Comment 29-2.

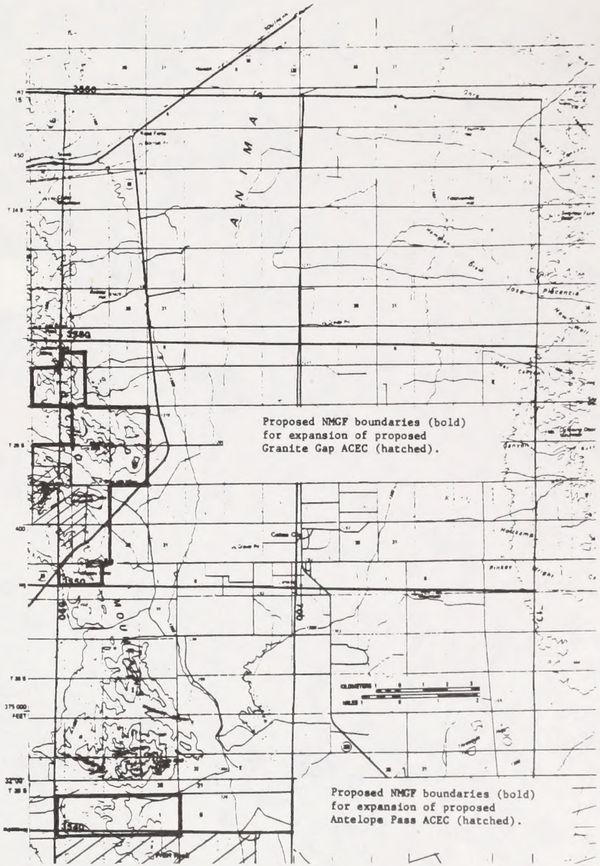
226-20 Livestock will continue to be excluded from this area as a part of the Proposed Plan.

226-21 This change has been made to the RMP.

226


HIDALGO CO
GRANT CO
HATCHET
LITTLE HATCHET MOUNTAINS
HACHITA
Canyon
Ridge
KILOMETERS
MILES

Proposed NMGF boundaries (bold)
for incorporation of the Little
Hatchet Mountains into the
Big Hatchet ACEC.


ANIMAS
MOUNTAINS
KILOMETERS
MILES
Placencia

Proposed NMGF boundaries (bold)
for expansion of proposed
Granite Gap ACEC (hatched).

Proposed NMGF boundaries (bold)
for expansion of proposed
Antelope Pass ACEC (hatched).

MODIFICATIONS
AND
CORRECTIONS

MODIFICATIONS AND CORRECTIONS

INTRODUCTION

The modifications and corrections section contains revisions made to the Mimbres Resource Area Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) based on new or more complete information, changes in BLM guidance since release of the Draft, or errors and omissions identified through the public review process. Minor changes are incorporated into the Errata section below.

ERRATA

The following changes in the Draft RMP/EIS are of editorial nature and are relatively minor. These changes should be incorporated into the Draft RMP/EIS.

Throughout Document

Change all references to Mimbres Culture Center to Mimbres Culture National Monument.

Acreage figures for Land Ownership Adjustments:

Alternative B 42,090 acres to 41,729 acres
Alternative C 232,710 acres to 230,710 acres

Acreage figures for ACECs and Other SMAs:
Alternative B 320,980 acres to 320,340 acres
Alternative C 86,980 acres to 86,340 acres

Chapters

Page 2-37, Column 1, under MANAGEMENT CONCERNS, 1. Rights-of-Way (ROW), first paragraph. Add the following to the end of the paragraph: NEW ROW CORRIDORS WOULD BE CONSIDERED ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS. NO EXCLUSION OR AVOIDANCE AREAS WOULD BE IDENTIFIED.

Page 2-39, Column 2, first full paragraph, line 3. Change acres . . . 3,011,730 to 3,012,091.

Page 2-39, Column 2, first full paragraph, line 18. Add the following phrase to the end of the sentence, so it reads . . . BOX AND THE GILA LOWER BOX THROUGH EXCHANGE OR PURCHASE AT FAIR MARKET VALUE, PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION.

Page 2-40, Column 1, under 2. ACECs and Other SMAs, second paragraph, line 1 and line 3.

Page 2-50, Column 2, under 3. ACECs and Other SMAs, second paragraph, line 1 and line 4. Add the word CORRIDOR after Trail.

Page 2-40, Column 1, under 2. ACECs and Other SMAs. Add the following paragraph as the third paragraph. VALID EXISTING RIGHTS ARE RECOGNIZED WITHIN THESE AREAS AND WILL NOT BE RESTRICTED UNLESS SPECIFICALLY STATED IN THE MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS FOR EACH ACEC OR SMA.

PAGE 2-40, Column 1, under 2. ACECs and Other SMAs, original third paragraph, first sentence. Change to read: The following four areas, totalling 33,280 acres, ARE BEING STUDIED FOR WILDERNESS SUITABILITY (see Map 2-12).

Page 2-40, Column 1, under 2. ACECs and Other SMAs, original third paragraph, second bullet, Gray Peak. Change acres: 16,080 to 14,678.

Page 2-41, Table 2-16, Uvas Valley. Change acres . . . 2,210 to 1,570 and TOTAL ACRES . . . 320,980 to 320,340.

Page 2-42, Column 2, under MANAGEMENT CONCERNS, 1. ROWs and Page 2-54, Column 1, 2nd full paragraph. Add the following as a separate paragraph: LINEAR ROWs THAT TERMINATE ON PRIVATE INHOLDINGS WITHIN AN EXCLUSION AREA MAY BE AUTHORIZED IF NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE EXISTS. SPECIAL STIPULATIONS FOR

AVOIDANCE AREAS WOULD ALSO APPLY TO THESE AUTHORIZATIONS. EXISTING ROWs WITHIN EXCLUSION AREAS WOULD BE RECOGNIZED AS GRANDFATHERED AND MAINTENANCE OF THESE FACILITIES WOULD BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE ROW GRANT.

Page 2-44, Table 2-17, Actions, Paragraph 11. Add the following to the end of the sentence: (ONLY IF THEY ACQUIRE PRIVATE LAND PORTION).

Page 2-45, Table 2-18, Page 2-58, Table 2-23, Notes: b/. Add the following as second sentence: POPULATION GOALS LISTED FOR THESE HMPs WERE ESTABLISHED AT THE TIME THE HMPs WERE DEVELOPED.

Page 2-46, Column 1. Add the following paragraph as the first paragraph. IT IS INTENDED THAT POPULATION GOALS CAN BE REACHED WITHOUT REDUCTION OF LIVESTOCK NUMBERS (THROUGH GRAZING MANAGEMENT AND LAND TREATMENTS), EXCEPT WHERE ELIMINATION OF GRAZING IS PRESCRIBED IN CERTAIN ACECs. POPULATION GOALS MAY BE REVISED AS NECESSARY THROUGH THE HMP MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROCESS.

Page 2-46, Column 2, under Desired Plant Communities, line 13. Delete sentence . . . UNDER THIS ALTERNATIVE, UTILIZATION OF BLACK GRAMA WOULD NOT EXCEED AN AVERAGE OF 30 PERCENT.

Page 2-50, Column 2, second paragraph, line 5. Add the following phrase to the end of the sentence, so it reads . . . ACECs AND OTHER SMAs THROUGH EXCHANGE OR PURCHASE AT FAIR MARKET VALUE, PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION.

Page 2-50, Column 2, under 2. ACECs and Other SMAs. Add the following as the third paragraph. VALID EXISTING RIGHTS WOULD BE RECOGNIZED WITHIN THESE AREAS AND WOULD NOT BE RESTRICTED UNLESS SPECIFICALLY STATED IN THE MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS OF EACH ACEC OR SMA.

Page 2-50, Column 2, under 2. ACECs and Other SMAs, line 2. Change potential to suitability, so sentence reads . . . WOULD BE STUDIED FOR WILDERNESS SUITABILITY (SEE . . .

Page 2-51, Table 2-21, Uvas Valley. Change acres . . . 2,210 to 1,570 and TOTAL ACRES . . . 86,980 to 86,340.

Page 2-52, Column 1, second bullet, Gray Peak. Change acres: 16,080 to 14,678.

Page 2-52, Column 1, under 3. Vehicle Management, third full paragraph. Add the following as the last sentence of this paragraph. EXISTING ROADS AND TRAILS ARE DEFINED AS THOSE IN EXISTENCE AT THE TIME OF THE DESIGNATION. ANY ROADS OR TRAILS CREATED BY THE PASSAGE OF VEHICLES AFTER THIS DATE WOULD BE SUBJECT TO CLOSURE.

Page 2-52, Column 2, under 4. Access, first paragraph. Add the following as the second sentence of the paragraph. TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, DEVELOPMENT OF ACCESS WOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED WITH THE COOPERATION OF ADJACENT LANDOWNERS AND PERMITTEES.

Page 2-53, Column 2, after first set of bullet items. Add the following two paragraphs.

SPECIFIC ACCESS ROUTES OR METHODS OF DEVELOPING ACCESS WOULD BE IDENTIFIED IN THE ROUTE ANALYSIS WHICH WOULD BE COMPLETED FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL AREA AFTER APPROVAL OF THE RMP. THIS PROCESS WOULD BE COORDINATED WITH ADJACENT LANDOWNERS AND PERMITTEES.

PRIOR TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACCESS INTO ANY OF THE ABOVE AREAS, A SIGNING AND PATROL PLAN WILL BE DEVELOPED TO ADDRESS POTENTIAL PROBLEMS RELATED TO TRESPASS ONTO PRIVATE LAND, LITTERING, AND VANDALISM.

Page 2-53, Column 2, Gila Middle Box (4). Add the words UPSTREAM OR as follows: Acquire legal public access to the boundary on UPSTREAM OR downstream side.

Page 2-53, Column 2, Little Hatchets (19). Add the following to the end of the sentence: (EAST AND WEST SIDES TO MAINTAIN PRESENT PHYSICAL ACCESS).

Page 2-54, Column 1, after second full paragraph and last bullet item. Add the following as the third paragraph:

LINEAR ROWs THAT TERMINATE ON PRIVATE INHOLDINGS WITHIN AN EXCLUSION AREA MAY BE AUTHORIZED IF NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE EXISTS. SPECIAL STIPULATIONS FOR AVOIDANCE AREAS WOULD ALSO APPLY TO THESE AUTHORIZATIONS. EXISTING ROWs WITHIN EXCLUSION AREAS ARE RECOGNIZED AS GRANDFATHERED AND MAINTENANCE OF THESE FACILITIES WOULD BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE ROW GRANT.

Page 2-55, Column 2, 5. Wildlife Habitat. Add the following paragraph after the second paragraph: IT IS INTENDED THAT POPULATION GOALS CAN BE REACHED WITHOUT REDUCTION OF LIVESTOCK NUMBERS (THROUGH GRAZING MANAGEMENT AND LAND TREATMENTS), EXCEPT WHERE ELIMINATION OF GRAZING IS PRESCRIBED IN CERTAIN ACECs. POPULATION GOALS MAY BE REVISED AS NECESSARY THROUGH THE HMP MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROCESS.

Page 2-56, Table 2-22, Actions, Paragraph 11. Add the following to the end of the sentence: (ONLY IF THEY ACQUIRE PRIVATE LAND PORTION).

Page 2-57, Column 2, under Desired Plant Communities, line 13. Add the following sentence: UNDER THIS ALTERNATIVE, UTILIZATION OF BLACK GRAMA WOULD NOT EXCEED A YEARLONG AVERAGE USE OF 50 PERCENT EXCEPT AS PRESCRIBED IN AN ALLOTMENT SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT PLAN.

Page 2-57, Column 2, under Land Treatments, line 14. Add the following sentence: AREAS OVER 10 PERCENT SLOPE AND WITHIN ½ MILE OF A PERENNIAL STREAM WOULD NOT BE TREATED CHEMICALLY.

Page 2-60, Column 1, first full paragraph. Add the following as the last sentence of the paragraph. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE IN THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT VEGETATION TREATMENT ON BLM LANDS IN THIRTEEN WESTERN STATES.

Page 4-24, Column 2, line 6. Change guarantee to allow so sentence reads as follows: . . . ownership would ALLOW, with prescribed . . .

Page 4-25, Column 1, fifth paragraph. Add the following as the second sentence of the paragraph. POTENTIAL PROBLEMS OR CONFLICTS BETWEEN LIVESTOCK AND BIGHORN SHEEP WOULD BE RESOLVED THROUGH THE HMP MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND REVISION PROCESS OR THROUGH THE PREPARATION OF GRAZING ACTIVITY PLANS AND ASSOCIATED RANGELAND MONITORING.

Page 4-25, Column 2, first paragraph, line 17. Add the following reference after the word treatments . . . (SEE THE FINAL EIS VEGETATION ON BLM LANDS IN THIRTEEN WESTERN STATES).

Page 4-25, Column 2, first paragraph, line 19. Delete have been and replace with are presently so sentence reads . . . of these areas ARE PRESENTLY withdrawn from grazing.

Page 4-25, Column 2, first paragraph, lines 23 and 24. Delete Post Office Canyon and replace with SCHOLES.

Page 4-26, Column 2, last paragraph. Change first and second sentence to read as follows: IN SUMMARY, LAND DISPOSAL WOULD LIKELY NOT AFFECT ON-GOING GRAZING OPERATIONS BUT ACTIONS WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF REVENUE TO THE GOVERNMENT FROM GRAZING FEES ON 619 AUs. UNDESIGNATED VEHICLE USE AREAS, AND THE CONTINUED ELIMINATION OF LIVESTOCK GRAZING WOULD HAVE SHORT- AND LONG-TERM IMPACTS ON LIVESTOCK GRAZING DUE TO EITHER PERMANENT LIVESTOCK REMOVAL OR CONFLICTS FROM HUMAN USERS.

Page 4-27, Column 1, line 5. Add the following to the end of the sentence: (Reference, see the Final EIS Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States).

Page 4-27, Column 1, under IN SUMMARY, line 12. Change short-term to long-term so sentence reads as follows: . . . cause a LONG-TERM loss of the targeted brush species.

Page 4-35, Column 1, lines 1 and 2. Delete desert rose and smooth figwort. Add the following to the end of the sentence: ORGAN MOUNTAIN FIGWORT, PLANK'S CATCHFLY, AND SMOOTH CUCUMBER.

Page 4-35, Column 2, under IN SUMMARY, line 10. Add the words: AND LONG- so the sentence reads as follows: . . . could cause some habitat loss in the short- AND LONG-TERM.

Page 4-43, Column 1, under MINERALS, OIL AND GAS. Add the following as the third paragraph: ABOUT 68,000 ACRES OF LAND HAVING MODERATE OIL AND GAS POTENTIAL WOULD BE UNAVAILABLE FOR LEASING AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE BIG HATCHET MOUNTAIN ACEC. THIS WOULD NOT BE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.

Page 4-49, Column 1, first full paragraph, line 4. Add the following phrase to the end of the sentence so sentence reads as follows: . . . areas MOSTLY IN HIDALGO COUNTY.

Page 4-52, Column 2, fourth paragraph, line 10. Add the following phrase after 201,420 acres . . . MOSTLY IN HIDALGO COUNTY.

Page 4-53, Column 1, first full paragraph, line 6. Change the word until to unless so the sentence reads as follows: . . . trails in these ACECs UNLESS the area is closed to . . .

Page 4-53, Column 2, last paragraph, line 2. Add the phrase: UNLESS OTHERWISE STIPULATED IN AN APPROVED AMP so the sentence reads as follows: . . . 30 percent, UNLESS OTHERWISE STIPULATED IN AN APPROVED AMP, would ensure longer-term survival of . . .

Page 4-64 and page 4-93, under WILDERNESS, second paragraph. Delete the following words: . . . add currently unrepresented ecosystems to the National Wilderness Preservation System including and add the word PROTECT so the sentence reads as follows: WILDERNESS STUDY OF THE APACHE BOX, GRAY PEAK, ORGAN NEEDLES, AND PEÑA BLANCA AREAS WOULD PROTECT HIGHLY SCENIC AREAS, HISTORIC SITES, AND HABITAT FOR ENDANGERED SPECIES.

Page 4-69, Column 2, third paragraph. Add the following to the end of the paragraph. THERE HAVE BEEN CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY GRAZING PERMITTEES THAT SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS SUCH AS ACECs OR WSAs WILL AFFECT LOAN OR PERMIT VALUES. LENDERS HAVE INDICATED THERE IS NOT SUFFICIENT EMPIRICAL SALES DATA THAT THEY CAN DEFINE AN ACTUAL DOLLAR AMOUNT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RANCHES WITH AND RANCHES WITHOUT THESE DESIGNATIONS. WITHIN THE MARKET, HOWEVER, THERE IS A PERCEPTION THAT THERE WILL BE ADDITIONAL BURDENS TO COMPLY WITH RESOURCE MANAGEMENT-RELATED.

RESTRICTIONS AND THAT THESE RESTRICTIONS WILL EVENTUALLY RESULT IN REDUCED PERMITTED GRAZING CAPACITY. AS A RESULT, SOME POTENTIAL BUYERS ARE RELUCTANT TO PURCHASE A RANCH WITH THESE PERCEIVED LIMITATIONS. THIS UNCERTAINTY IS CAUSING LENDERS TO BE MORE CONSERVATIVE IN FINANCING RANCHES WITH IDENTIFIED OR PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CONFLICTS OR THAT MAY BE SUBJECT TO ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS IN THE FUTURE (CARRASCO 1992).

Page 4-71, Column 1, third full paragraph, line 3. Add the following phrase to the end of the sentence, so it reads . . . 2,451 AUs (MOSTLY IN HIDALGO COUNTY).

Page 4-71, Column 2, first partial paragraph, line 20. Add the two following sentences . . . IN ADDITION TO THE ECONOMIC HARDSHIP IMPOSED ON INDIVIDUAL RANCHERS, THERE COULD BE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON REVENUES TO LOCAL COUNTY GOVERNMENTS IN THE FORM OF LOST TAX REVENUES. THIS, IN TURN, COULD IMPACT SCHOOLS AND OTHER SERVICES

IN THE AFFECTED COUNTIES, PARTICULARLY HIDALGO COUNTY.

Page 4-72, Column 2, second paragrpah, line 2. Change the word EIGHT to NINE.

Page 4-72, Column 2, second paragraph. Add the following as the last sentence of the paragraph: THIS LOSS WOULD BE MOSTLY IN HIDALGO COUNTY.

Page 4-73, Column 2, under Nonenergy Leasable Mineral. Add the following as the second paragraph: ABOUT 500 ACRES OF LAND HAVING MODERATE SODIUM POTENTIAL IN THE LORDSBURG PLAYA WOULD NOT BE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC LEASING AND DEVELOPMENT BECAUSE OF THE NO SURFACE OCCUPANCY STIPULATION ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL CORRIDOR DESIGNATION. THIS IS IN THE SAME AREA WHERE PHELPS DODGE MINING COMPANY MADE RECENT APPLICATION FOR A SODIUM CARBONATE PROSPECTING PERMIT.

Page 4-80, Column 2, second paragraph, line 3. Delete have been and replace with are presently, so sentence reads . . . these areas ARE PRESENTLY withdrawn from grazing.

Page 4-80, Column 2, second paragraph, line 6. Add the phrase . . . PORTIONS OF THE, so the sentence reads . . . GAME FARM AND PORTIONS OF THE CENTRAL PELONCILLO MOUNTAINS FOR . . .

Page 4-80, Column 2, fifth paragraph, last sentence. Change to read as follows: LAND DISPOSAL WOULD LIKELY NOT AFFECT ON-GOING GRAZING OPERATIONS BUT WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF REVENUE TO THE GOVERNMENT FROM GRAZING FEES ON 31,980 AUs. CONTINUED ELIMINATION OF LIVESTOCK GRAZING WOULD HAVE SHORT- AND LONG-TERM IMPACTS FROM THE PERMANENT LOSS OF LIVESTOCK USE.

Page 4-81, Column 1, line 2. Change MULTIPLE-ME to MULTIPLE-USE.

Page 4-81, Column 1, line 6. Delete the word BLOCKED.

Page 4-81, Column 1, second paragraph, line 6 and line 18. Change DOSED to CLOSED.

Page 4-81, Column 2, fourth paragraph, line 5. Change KW to key.

Page 4-82, Column 1, first full paragraph, line 5. Add the following reference after Las Cruces/Lordsburg MFPA/EIS: FINAL EIS VEGETATION TREATMENT ON BLM LANDS IN THIRTEEN WESTERN STATES (1991).

Page 4-84, Column 2, third full paragraph, line 1. Change 29 to 24.

Page 4-99, Column 1, first full paragraph. Add the following to the end of the paragraph. THERE HAVE BEEN CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY GRAZING PERMITTEES THAT SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS SUCH AS ACECs OR WSAs WILL AFFECT LOAN OR PERMIT VALUES. LENDERS HAVE INDICATED THERE IS NOT SUFFICIENT EMPIRICAL SALES DATA THAT THEY CAN DEFINE AN ACTUAL DOLLAR AMOUNT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RANCHES WITH AND RANCHES WITHOUT THESE DESIGNATIONS. WITHIN THE MARKET, HOWEVER, THERE IS A PERCEPTION THAT THERE WILL BE ADDITIONAL BURDENS TO COMPLY WITH RESOURCE MANAGEMENT-RELATED RESTRICTIONS AND THAT THESE RESTRICTIONS WILL EVENTUALLY RESULT IN REDUCED PERMITTED GRAZING CAPACITY. AS A RESULT, SOME POTENTIAL BUYERS ARE RELUCTANT TO PURCHASE A RANCH WITH THESE PERCEIVED LIMITATIONS. THIS UNCERTAINTY IS CAUSING LENDERS TO BE MORE CONSERVATIVE IN FINANCING RANCHES WITH IDENTIFIED OR PROPOSED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CONFLICTS OR THAT MAY BE SUBJECT TO ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS IN THE FUTURE (CARRASCO 1992).

Appendices

Page H-4, Column 1, under ALTERNATIVE B, entry 2. Add the following to the end of the sentence: EXCEPT FOR THE CENTRAL PORTION OF THE AREA (AROUND BIG HATCHET PEAK) WHICH IS CLOSED TO VEHICLE USE (4,160 ACRES).

Page H-6, Column 2, entry 6. Delete sentence.

Page H-6, Column 2, entry 7. Delete sentence and replace with the following: UPON ACQUISITION OF PRIVATE LAND, CONSULT AND COORDINATE WITH THE GRAZING PERMITTEE TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT PROJECTS FOR THE PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF SPRINGS AND RIPARIAN AREAS. PROJECTS MAY CONSIST OF SMALL ENCLOSURES (10 ACRES OR LESS), SPRING DEVELOPMENTS, PASTURE FENCING, CONSTRUCTION OF LIVESTOCK WATER SOURCES AWAY FROM RIPARIAN AREAS, RELOCATION OF EXISTING WATER TROUGHS AWAY FROM RIPARIAN AREAS, AND REVEGETATION OF RIPARIAN AREAS. UP TO A TOTAL OF 10 MILES OF FENCE COULD BE CONSTRUCTED.

Page H-8, Column 1, under ALTERNATIVE B, entry 3. Change to read as follows: •EXCLUDE AUTHORIZATIONS FOR ROWs EXCEPT WITHIN THE EXISTING UTILITY CORRIDOR. THE CORRIDOR WILL BE CONFINED TO A WIDTH OF ¼ MILE.

Page H-8, Column 2, under ALTERNATIVE C, entry 3. Change to read as follows: •EXCLUDE AUTHORIZATIONS FOR NEW ROWs IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN) EXCEPT WITHIN THE EXISTING UTILITY CORRIDOR. THE CORRIDOR WILL BE CONFINED TO A WIDTH OF ¼ MILE.

Page H-9, Column 1, under ALTERNATIVE B, entry 6. Add the phrase AND NON-ENERGY, so sentence reads: •CLOSE TO FLUID AND NON-ENERGY MINERAL LEASING.

Page H-9, Column 2, under ALTERNATIVE C, entry 7. Delete the following portion of sentence . . . and change to "I" Category allotment. Sentence should read . . . •DEVELOPMENT LIVESTOCK GRAZING PLAN TO PROTECT OR ENHANCE RIPARIAN VALUES.

Page H-9, Column 2, under ALTERNATIVE C, entry 10. Add the two words--MECHANICAL and NATURAL so sentence reads as follows: •CONSIDER SELECTED MECHANICAL THINNING OF ALLIGATOR JUNIPER TO MAINTAIN NATURAL GRASSLAND AREAS.

Page H-12, Column 1, under Alternative B, Entry 3; Column 2, under Alternate C, Entry 3.
Page H-14, Column 2, under Alternative C, third entry.
Page H-15, Column 2, first entry.
Page H-16, Column 2, under Alternative B, third entry.
Page H-24, Column 1, second entry.
Page H-24, Column 2, under Alternative C, second entry.
Add the following to the end of the sentence: IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN).

Page H-4, Column 1, under ALTERNATIVE B, entry 1; Column 2, under Alternative C, entry 1.
Page H-6, Column 1, under ALTERNATIVE B, entry 1; Column 2, under ALTERNATIVE C, entry 1.
Page H-9, Column 1, under ALTERNATIVE B, entry 1; Column 2, under ALTERNATIVE C, entry 1.
Page H-11, Column 2, under Alternative B, first entry; Column 2, entry 2.
Page H-12, Column 1, under Alternative B, first entry; Column 2, under Alternative C, first entry.
Page H-16, Column 2, under Alternative B, first entry.
Page H-17, Column 2, under Alternatives B and C, first entries.
Page H-19, Column 1, under ALTERNATIVE B, entry 1; Column 2, under ALTERNATIVE C, entry 1.
Page H-21, Column 1, under Alternative B, first entry.
Page H-23, Column 2, under Alternative C, first entry.
Page H-24, Column 1, under Alternative B, first entry.
Page H-24, Column 2, under Alternative C, first entry.
Page H-26, Column 2, under Alternative C, first entry.
Page H-27, Column 2, under Alternative C, first entry.
Page H-28, Column 2, under Alternative B, first entry.
Page H-28, Column 2, under Alternative C, first entry.

Page H-32, Column 1, under Alternative B, first entry; Column 1, under Alternative C, third entry.
Page H-34, Column 2, under Alternative C, first entry.
Page H-35, Column 1, under Alternative B, first entry; Column 2, under Alternative C, first entry.
Page H-36, Column 2, under Alternative B, first entry.
Page H-38, Column 1, under Alternative B, first entry; Column 2, under Alternative C, first entry.
Page H-43, Column 2, under Alternative C, first entry.
Page H-44, Column 1, under ALTERNATIVE B, entry 1.
Page H-48, Column 2, under Alternative C, first entry.
Page H-50, Column 2, under Alternative B, first entry.
Page H-51, Column 1, under Alternative B, first entry; under Alternative C, first entry.
Page H-53, Column 1, under ALTERNATIVE B, entry 1; Column 2, under ALTERNATIVE C, entry 1.
Add the following to the end of the sentence: . . . INHOLDING THROUGH EXCHANGE OR PURCHASE AT FAIR MARKET VALUE, PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION.

Page H-17, Column 2, under Alternative B, entry 14; Page H-18, Column 1, entries 1 and 8. Change OWL CANYON ALLOTMENT to SCHOLES ALLOTMENT.

Page H-4, Column 1, under ALTERNATIVE B, entry 3; Column 2, under ALTERNATIVE C, entry 3.
Page H-6, Column 1, under ALTERNATIVE B, entry 3; Column 2, under ALTERNATIVE C, entry 3.
Page H-9, Column 1, under ALTERNATIVE B, entry 3; Column 2, under ALTERNATIVE C, entry 3.
Page H-17, Column 2, under Alternatives B and C, third entries.
Page H-19, Column 1, under ALTERNATIVE B, entry 3; Column 2 under ALTERNATIVE C, entry 3.
Page H-21, Column 2, entry 2.
Page H-22, Column 2, entry 1.
Page H-23, Column 2, under Alternative C, entry 3.
Page H-26, Column 2, under Alternative C, entry 3.
Page H-27, Column 2, under Alternative C, entry 3.
Page H-28, Column 2, under Alternative B, entry 3.
Page H-29, Column 2, first entry.
Page H-30, Column 1, under Alternative A, first entry; Column 2, Alternatives B and C, third entry.
Page H-31, Column 1, under Alternative B, third entry; Column 2, under Alternative C, third entry.
Page H-32, Column 1, entry 3; under Alternative C, third entry.
Page H-34, Column 2, under Alternative C, entry 3.
Page H-35, Column 1, under Alternative B, entry 2 and Column 2, under Alternative C, entry 3.
Page H-36, Column 2, under Alternative B, entry 3.
Page H-37, Column 2, under ALTERNATIVE B, entry 3.
Page H-38, Column 2, entry 2; Column 2, under Alternative C, entry 3.
Page H-39, Column 2, under Alternative C, entry 3.
Page H-40, Column 1, under Alternative B, entry 3.
Page H-41, Column 2, under Alternative B, entry 3; under Alternative C, entry 3.
Page H-43, Column 2, under Alternative C, entry 3.
Page H-46, Column 2, under Alternative B, entry 3; under Alternative C, entry 3.
Page H-48, Column 2, under Alternative C, entry 3.
Page H-51, Column 2, entry 2; under Alternative C, entry 3.
Page H-52, Column 2, under Alternative B, entry 3.
Page H-53, Column 1, under ALTERNATIVE B, entry 3; Column 2, under ALTERNATIVE C, entry 3.
Change to read as follows: EXCLUDE AUTHORIZATIONS FOR NEW ROWs IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN).

Page H-19, Column 2, entry 9, Delete sentence.

Page H-19, Column 2, entry 10. Change to read: •CONSULT AND COORDINATE WITH THE LIVESTOCK PERMITTEE TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT PROJECTS FOR THE PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF SPRINGS AND RIPARIAN AREAS.

PROJECTS MAY CONSIST OF SMALL ENCLOSURES (10 ACRES OR LESS), SPRING DEVELOPMENTS, CONSTRUCTION OF LIVESTOCK WATER SOURCES AWAY FROM RIPARIAN AREAS, RELOCATION OF EXISTING WATER TROUGHS AWAY FROM RIPARIAN AREAS, AND REVEGETATION OF RIPARIAN AREAS. UP TO A TOTAL OF 1 MILE OF FENCE COULD BE CONSTRUCTED.

Page H-19, Column 2, last entry under both ALTERNATIVE B and ALTERNATIVE C; Page H-32, Column 2. Under Alternative B: •CLOSE TO FUELWOOD SALE OR COLLECTION.

Page H-21, Column 2, entry 6. Add the following to the end of first sentence: . . . IN UPLAND AREAS. Add the following as the second sentence: DEVELOP A LIVESTOCK GRAZING PLAN TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE RIPARIAN VALUES.

Page H-24, Column 1, under Alternative B, entry 2. Add the following to the end of the sentence: . . ., EXCEPT FOR THE CENTRAL PORTION OF THE AREA (ENCOMPASSING THE HIGHER PEAKS) WHICH IS CLOSED TO VEHICLE USE (5,900 ACRES).

Page H-32, Column 2, under Alternative C, entry 6. Change the sentence to read: •COMPLY WITH THE REVISED AMP (AND RIPARIAN MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES).

Page H-32, Column 2. Add the following as the last entry under Alternative C: •CLOSE TO FUELWOOD SALE OR COLLECTION.

Page H-37, Column 2, under ALTERNATIVE B, entry 7. Change to read: •MONITOR GRAZING IMPACTS ON IMPORTANT ECOLOGICAL CRITERIA, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO *Atriplex griffithsii*.

Page H-37, Column 2, under ALTERNATIVE B. Add the following as the last entry. •MANAGE GRAZING AND AUTHORIZE RANGE IMPROVEMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE BOX M ALLOTMENT.

Page H-44, Column 2, entry 1. Change to read as follows: •LIMIT VEHICLE USE TO DESIGNATED ROADS AND TRAILS EXCEPT FOR THE SCENIC ACEC PORTION WHICH IS CLOSED TO VEHICLE USE (8,840 ACRES).

Page H-44, Column 2, entry 2. Change to read as follows: •EXCLUDE AUTHORIZATIONS FOR NEW ROWs IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN) EXCEPT WITHIN EXISTING UTILITY CORRIDORS. THE EAST-WEST CORRIDOR NEAR VADO AND THE ONES RUNNING NORTH AND SOUTH WILL BE CONFINED TO A WIDTH OF ¼ MILE. THE CORRIDOR IN THE ANTHONY GAP AREA WILL BE CONFINED TO A WIDTH OF ½ MILE.

Page H-44, Column 2, entry 11. Delete sentence and replace with the following sentence: •PROHIBIT DOGS AND PETS AND REQUIRE HIKING ON DESIGNATED TRAILS ONLY IN UPPER ICE CANYON ABOVE THE DRIFT FENCE.

Page H-49, Column 1, under ALTERNATIVE B, entry 1; Column 2, under ALTERNATIVE C, entry 1. Add the following to the end of the sentence . . . THROUGH EXCHANGE OR PURCHASE AT FAIR MARKET VALUE, PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION.

Page H-49, Column 2, entry 1; under ALTERNATIVE C, entry 3. Change to read: •EXCLUDE NEW ROW AUTHORIZATIONS OUTSIDE EXISTING SITES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN).

Page H-49, Column 2, under ALTERNATIVE C, entry 5. Add the following phrase: FOR MINERAL LEASING . . . so sentence reads: •DESIGNATE NSO FOR MINERAL LEASING WITHIN 100 FEET OF PETROGLYPH SITE.

Page H-53, headings--ALTERNATIVE B and ALTERNATIVE C. Change acres from 2,210 to 1,570.

Page H-53, Column 1, under ALTERNATIVE B, entry 6; Column 2, under ALTERNATIVE C, entry 5. Change to read: •REVISE EXISTING

AMP FOR LIVESTOCK GRAZING TO REFLECT CURRENT GRAZING PRACTICES.

Page H-53, Column 1, under ALTERNATIVE B, entry 7; Column 2, under ALTERNATIVE C, entry 6. Change to read: •EXCLUSION OF LIVESTOCK GRAZING FOLLOWING A WILDFIRE WOULD BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REVISED AMP.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Mineral Resources

- A-1 BLM Mineral Resources Policy A-1
- A-2 Mineral Leasing Proposals A-2

Appendix B: Lands

- B-1 Lands and Minerals Disposal Policy B-1
- B-2 Set Asides B-6
- B-3 Memorandums of Understanding and Cooperative Agreements B-8

Appendix C: Livestock Grazing

- C-1 Mimbres Resource Area Allotment Categories C-1
- C-2 Present Allotment Status and Category (1991) C-2
- C-3 Grazing Management Considerations for the Mimbres Resource Area C-10

Appendix D: Desired Plant Community D-1

Appendix E: Cultural Resources E-1

Appendix F: Recreation

- F-1 Recreation Opportunity Spectrum F-1
- F-2 Implementation of ORV Designations F-4

Appendix G: Visual Resource Management G-1

Appendix H: Special Management Areas

- H-1 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern H-1
- H-2 Special Management Areas--Trails H-4
- H-2 Supplement Continental Divide National Scenic Trail Alternative Route Comparison H-30
- H-3 Research Natural Areas (RNAs) and National Natural Landmark (NNL) H-32

Appendix I: Wilderness

- I-1 Wilderness Inventory Report, Pena Blanca I-1
- I-2 Wilderness Inventory Report, Organ Needles I-4
- I-3 Wilderness Inventory Report, Gray Peak I-7
- I-4 Wilderness Inventory Report, Apache Box I-10

Appendix J: Gila River Wild and Scenic River Inventory Report Summary J-1

Appendix K: Major Soil Types in the Mimbres Resource Area K-1

Appendix L: Special Status Species

- L-1 Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Plant Species Potentially Occurring on Public Land in the Mimbres Resource Area L-1
- L-2 Special Status Animals L-9

APPENDIX A-1
BLM MINERAL RESOURCES POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This statement sets forth BLM policy for management of mineral and energy resources on public land. It reflects the provisions of three important Acts of Congress: the Mining and Minerals Policy Act of 1970, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976, and the National Materials and Minerals Policy, Research and Development Act of 1980. This policy statement represents a commitment by BLM to implement the policies of these statutes consistent with BLM's other statutory obligations.

The Mining and Minerals Policy Act of 1970 declares that it is the continuing policy of the Federal Government to foster and encourage private enterprise in the development of a stable domestic minerals industry and the orderly and economic development of domestic mineral resources.

FLPMA reiterates that the 1970 Mining and Minerals Policy Act be implemented and directs that public land be managed in a manner which recognizes the Nation's need for domestic sources of minerals and other resources. FLPMA also provides for improved inventory, planning, and decision processes.

The 1980 National Materials and Minerals Policy, Research and Development Act restates the need to implement the 1970 Act and requires the Secretary of the Interior to improve the quality of minerals data in Federal land use decision making. In April 1982, the President delivered to Congress the first annual report required by the 1980 Act, which provided specific guidance to implement these acts.

The BLM recognizes that public land is an important source of the Nation's mineral and energy resources, some of which are critical and strategic. BLM is responsible for making public land available for orderly and efficient development of these resources under principles of balanced multiple-use management.

The following principles will guide BLM in managing mineral resources on public land:

1. Except for Congressional withdrawals, public land shall remain open and available for mineral exploration and development unless withdrawal or other administrative action is clearly justified in the National interest.

2. BLM actively encourages and facilitates the development by private industry of public land mineral resources in a manner that satisfies National and local needs and provides for economically and environmentally sound exploration, extraction, and reclamation practices.

3. BLM will process mineral patent applications, permits, operating plans, mineral exchanges, leases, and other use authorizations for public land in a timely and efficient manner.

4. BLM's land use plans and multiple-use management decisions will recognize that mineral exploration and development can occur concurrently or sequentially with other resource uses. The Bureau further recognizes that land use planning is a dynamic process and decisions will be updated as new data are evaluated.

5. Land use plans will reflect geological, energy and mineral values on public land through more effective geology, energy and mineral resource data assessment.

6. BLM will supervise salable and leasable mineral operations to ensure proper resource recovery and evaluation, production verification, diligence and inspection and enforcement of the lease, sale or permit terms. BLM will receive Fair Market Value for mineral commodities where the laws provide.

7. The Bureau will maintain effective professional, technical, and managerial personnel knowledgeable in mineral exploration and development.

These principles will be implemented immediately and further clarified where necessary through specific guidance to the field.

APPENDIX A-2
MINERAL LEASING PROPOSALS

INTRODUCTION

Prior to offering lands for leasing, the New Mexico State Office Adjudication Staff reviews the records to determine if the minerals are available for leasing and if stipulations need to be attached to the lease form.

LEASE TERMS AND CONDITIONS

A BLM oil and gas and geothermal lease form includes the lease terms and conditions which cover subjects such as bonding, rentals and royalties, inspections, and safety. Also covered are protection of the environment, surface resources, and improvements.

The "conduct of operations" section of the lease form establishes the general requirements for the protection of surface resources and is referred to herein as "standard" lease terms. This section provides authority for the modification to sighting, design of facilities, timing of operations, and specification for interim and final reclamation measures to minimize adverse environmental impacts. The standard lease terms specifically require that the lessee contact the lessor prior to disturbing the surface and specify that the lessee may be required to complete minor inventories or short-term special studies.

Stipulations

Stipulations are conditions of lease issuance which the local office of the BLM or other agency provide for additional and more stringent environmental protection within the terms of the lease contract. Without stipulations, proposed operations can be modified but not denied (except under certain specific, nondiscretionary statutes).

Stipulations will be used whenever mitigating measures deprive a lessee of basic lease rights. Because of this effect on lease rights, lessees must be aware of all stipulations prior to acceptance of a lease offer by BLM.

BLM policy is that the use of stipulations should be considered appropriate only when they are both necessary and justifiable. The contractual controls existing in the lease (the standard terms, regulations, and formal operational orders) provide substantial latitude within which the BLM may require modification of the sighting, design and timing of operations on leaseholds, and interim and final reclamation measures. They do not, however, allow the BLM to require modifications to proposed operations that would prevent economic extraction of otherwise commercial deposits of oil and gas. Therefore, if a lessee may be prevented from economically extracting fluid minerals, then stipulations are necessary and are to be used. A stipulation is justifiable if there are resources, values, uses, or users present that (1) cannot coexist with fluid minerals operations, or (2) cannot be adequately managed or accommodated on other lands for the duration of the operation, and (3) would provide greater benefits to the public than those of fluid minerals operations.

The content and accurate wording of stipulations are very important since stipulations become part of the lease contract. If the stipulations are ambiguous, potential lessees will be uncertain as to the value of the lease. Also, if poorly written, the BLM may fail to retain, within the terms of the lease, the right to deny operations. Therefore, to the extent feasible, stipulations are to specify the reason for the stipulation, the lands involved, and the probable effect of the stipulations on lease activities.

The existing and proposed fluid leasing stipulations to be used in the alternatives follow in this Appendix. Also shown are the standard formats for the No Surface Occupancy, Timing Limitation, and Controlled Surface Use stipulations.

The process through which the Special Management Areas (SMAs) were identified included, by alternative, stipulations to protect their values from fluid minerals leasing and development.

The analysis of potential impacts on fluid leasing, by alternative, was done on an interdisciplinary basis. The rationale through which stipulations were assigned consisted of consideration of the resource value, consideration of the fluid mineral potential, and a determination as to which constraints could afford maximum protection while allowing for fluid mineral development. In those areas where resource values and fluid mineral exploration and development were found to be mutually exclusive, where protection of resource values was clearly in the public interest and where it was shown that a less restrictive stipulation could not adequately protect the resource value, the No Surface Occupancy stipulation was assigned.

Public land may be affected by discretionary and nondiscretionary closures which are presented in a lease as stipulations. A discretionary closure includes those lands where the BLM has determined that oil, gas, or geothermal leasing, even with the most restrictive stipulations (including No Surface Occupancy for the entire leasehold), would not adequately protect other resources, values, or land uses. Nondiscretionary closures include those lands that must be closed to oil, gas, or geothermal leasing for reasons beyond the discretion of the BLM. These are lands specifically precluded from fluid mineral leasing by law, regulations, Secretarial or Executive Order, or that have been otherwise formally closed by decisions reached beyond the scope of the BLM. The White Sands Missile Range (WSMR) and Doña Ana Range portion of Fort Bliss military areas are excluded from leasing by nondiscretionary closures.

Lands which are currently under lease will not be affected by stipulations identified under the Balanced, Conservation, and Production Alternatives. New leases for lands which are contained in SMAs will contain the stipulation or stipulations designated in the selected alternative. Activities normally deferred to activity planning, or other planning completed subsequent to the Resource Management Plan (RMP), include drill site location; field development and facility layout plans; utilization and communitization plans; transportation, power or pipeline routing plans (other than for major designated corridors); and others. Many of these activities are addressed after an Application for Permit to Drill (APD) is received. One APD every 3 years is expected for the life of this RMP.

All future geophysical exploration, leasing, and development proposals are to be reviewed for conformance with the RMP to ensure the availability of land for these activities and to ensure compliance with applicable mitigating measures as identified in the RMP. In certain cases, geophysical exploration may be restricted or excluded. Any site-specific reviews required by operating orders, regulations, or to ensure National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance will also need to be performed at appropriate times.

Waivers, Exceptions, and Modifications To Lease Stipulations

Waivers, exceptions, and modifications to existing lease stipulations can be granted if circumstances or relative resource values change or if the lessee demonstrates that operations can be conducted without causing unacceptable impacts. A waiver is a permanent exemption to a lease stipulation. An exception is one-time, case-by-case exemption to a stipulation. A modification is a change to the provisions of a stipulation, either temporarily or for the term of the lease.

Any requests for waivers, exceptions, or modifications in the Resource Area will involve an analysis of associated impacts. Depending on the severity of these impacts, the request may be (1) granted by the Area Manager, (2) publicly posted for 30 days as required by the Leasing Reform Act of 1987, or (3) analyzed through an amendment to the RMP.

MINERAL LEASING PROPOSALS

Continuing Management Guidance

The following are existing leasing stipulations and areas closed to leasing.

Not Open to Leasing:

Aden Lava Flow WSA
Alamo Hueco Mountains WSA
Apache Box WSA
Big Hatchet Mountains WSA
Blue Creek WSA
Cedar Mountains WSA
Cooke's Range WSA
Cowboy Spring WSA
Florida Mountains WSA
Gila Lower Box WSA

Guadalupe Canyon WSA
Las Uvas Mountains WSA
Organ Mountains WSA
Peloncillo Mountains WSA
Robledo Mountains WSA
West Potrillo Mountains/Mt. Riley WSA

Open to Leasing with Stipulations:

Recreation and Public Purpose (> than 40 acres)

Airports
City of Las Cruces Sludge Site
Doña Ana Prison Site
Las Cruces Shooting Range
Lord's Ranch
NMSU Observatory Site
Northwestern University Observatory Site
School Sites
Spring Canyon Park

Other Areas

Jornada Experimental Range
NMSU College Ranch
White Sands Missile Range Safety Evacuation Area

In addition to the above the following restrictions will be placed on fluid mineral leasing.

PROPOSED PLAN

Not Open to Leasing:

Aden Lava Flow **RNA**
Alamo Hueco Mountains ACEC
Antelope Pass **RNA**
Apache Box ACEC
Bear Creek ACEC
Big Hatchet Mountains ACEC
Central Peloncillo Mountains ACEC
Cooke's Range ACEC
Cowboy Spring ACEC
Doña Ana Mountains ACEC
Florida Mountains ACEC
Gila Lower Box ACEC
Gila Middle Box ACEC
Granite Gap ACEC
Guadalupe Canyon ACEC
Kilbourne Hole **NNL**
Lordsburg Playa **RNA**
Northern Peloncillo Mountains ACEC
Old Town ACEC
Organ/Franklin Mountains ACEC
Paleozoic Trackways **RNA**
Robledo Mountains ACEC
San Diego Mountain ACEC
Uvas Valley ACEC

Open to Leasing with No Surface Occupancy:

Butterfield Trail (within ¼ mile of trail)
Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (within ½ mile of trail)
Los Tules ACEC
Rincon ACEC (within 100 feet of petroglyphs)

Serial No._________

NO SURFACE OCCUPANCY STIPULATION

No surface occupancy or use is allowed on the lands described below (legal subdivision or other description).

For the purpose of:

Any changes to this stipulation will be made in accordance with the land use plan and/or the regulatory provisions for such changes. (For guidance on the use of this stipulation, see BLM Manual 1624 and 3101 or FS Manual 1950 and 2820.)

Form #/Date

Serial No._________

TIMING LIMITATION STIPULATION

No surface use is allowed during the following time period(s). This stipulation does not apply to operation and maintenance of production facilities.

On the lands described below:

For the purpose of (reasons):

Any changes to this stipulation will be made in accordance with the land use plan and/or the regulatory provisions for such changes. (For guidance on the use of this stipulation, see BLM Manual 1624 and 3101 or FS Manual 1950 and 2820.)

Form #/Date

Serial No._________

CONTROLLED SURFACE USE STIPULATION

Surface occupancy or use is subject to the following special operating constraints.

On the lands described below:

For the purpose of:

Any changes to this stipulation will be made in accordance with the land use plan and/or the regulatory provisions for such changes. (For guidance on the use of this stipulation, see BLM Manual 1624 and 3101 or FS Manual 1950 and 2820.)

Form #/Date

APPENDIX B-1
LANDS AND MINERALS DISPOSAL POLICY

SURFACE ESTATE DISPOSAL POLICY

All surface estate disposal actions require the preparation of a mineral report to assess the mineral potential of the property prior to disposal.

Any potential interference with mineral development will be considered through the disposal process. The creation of a split surface mineral estate causing surface interference with Federal mineral development will be avoided to the extent possible. Any surface disposal action within the Rio Grande Valley will be analyzed for potential impacts to Federal mineral material development.

The following procedures will be followed for the various types of surface estate land disposal actions in the Mimbres Resource Area.

EXCHANGES

Disposal by exchange must meet the criteria outlined in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) Sec. 206, whereby it is determined that the public interest will be well served by making the proposed exchange. Exchanges outside of disposal areas may be possible if it is clearly determined that it is in the best interest of the public. Exchanges that would result in the acquisition of non-public lands in disposal areas will not be considered. The following principles will guide the Mimbres Resource Area in its land exchange program.

1. The Mimbres Resource Area will continue to strive to process mutually benefitting, public interest land exchanges in a timely and efficient manner.

2. **THE PREFERRED METHOD OF ACQUISITION IS THROUGH EXCHANGES RATHER THAN PURCHASE.** This will reduce the expansion of Federal real estate holdings and help to ensure the integrity of State and local tax bases.

3. Comments from the State, local governments, and the general public shall be sought and considered before completion of each exchange.

4. Patent and deed reservations and conditions will be kept to the absolute minimum necessary to complete the transaction. Rights of third parties holding rights-of-way and other legal interests in the exchanged lands will be protected.

5. The generally preferred rule is for both surface and subsurface (mineral) estates to be traded in an exchange. However, due to third party encumbrances, or difficulties in the valuation process, it may be preferable to complete certain exchanges with reservations. Such exceptions to the generally preferred rule are to be made on a case-by-case basis.

6. Exchanges shall be utilized to consolidate or unite the surface and subsurface estates for both the Federal Government and non-Federal owners in split or mixed-estate situations.

7. Exchanges may be utilized to effect ownership and management area boundary changes and to form more logical and efficient land and resource management areas for both the BLM and non-Federal owners.

8. Whenever the law permits, expenses incurred by BLM on exchange actions for the benefit of other Federal agencies shall be recovered from the benefitting agency. The BLM shall not attempt to recover nominal costs.

9. When an exchange involves the cancellation of a grazing permit or lease, the compensation for rangeland improvements and 2-year notification requirements of Section 402(g) of FLPMA and 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 4110 will be met.

10. The acquisition of non-public lands in Special Management Areas or lands containing unique or unusual historic, cultural, mineral, recreational, scientific, scenic or wildlife habitat values will be

pursued as a first priority. Likewise, proposals that would convey lands out of Federal ownership that possess special values will not be considered when formulating any exchange proposals.

SALES

Property selected for sale must be identified as being potentially suitable for disposal in an approved land-use plan and must meet one or more of the criteria outlined in FLPMA Sec. 203. Proposals that would convey non-public lands within disposal areas will not be considered. In addition, if the tract is 2,500 acres or more, procedures outlined in Sec. 203(c) must also be followed. The disposal criteria is as follows:

- Such tract because of its location or other characteristics is difficult and uneconomic to manage as part of public land, and is not suitable for management by another Federal department or agency; or

- Such tract was acquired for a specific purpose, and the tract is no longer needed for that or any other Federal purpose; or

- Disposal of such tract will serve important public objectives, including but not limited to expansion of communities and economic development, which cannot be achieved prudently or feasibly on land other than public land and which outweighs other public objectives and values, including but not limited to recreation and scenic values, which would be served by maintaining such tract in Federal ownership.

Conformity with one or more of these criteria must be determined during the preparation of an environmental assessment (EA). Anticipated environmental impacts to existing resources such as minerals, wildlife, recreation, range, cultural resources, wilderness values, floodplains, paleontological values, visual resources, areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC), wetlands, special status (T&E) species and habitats, wild and scenic rivers, prime or unique farmlands, and social and economic conditions, will be considered during the preparation of each EA. The EA will be used to determine whether or not the subject parcel is truly suitable to be offered for sale. Once this determination has been made, a fair market appraisal of the property will be completed to set the minimum acceptable bid.

Also, assessed is a determination as to what method of sale will be used if the tract is in fact deemed suitable for sale. Several factors are considered in determining the method of sale which include, but are not limited to: the needs of State or local governments, adjoining landowners' interests and concerns, public policies, historical uses, and equitable distribution of the land. The Mimbres Resource Area policy for determining the sale method is as follows:

1. Competitive Bidding is the preferred method of sale and will be used where clearly there would be a number of interested parties bidding for the land and they could make practicable use of the land regardless of adjoining landownership. Competitive bidding will also be used where the land is clearly within a developing or urbanizing area and land values are increasing due to their location and interest on the competitive market. If there are no overriding bases for modifying competition or direct sale, the land will be offered through competitive bidding. Normal practice for competitive sales is to first offer the land for sale by sealed bid; if unsold, offer for sale over-the-counter.

2. Modified Competitive Bidding may be used to permit the existing grazing user or adjoining landowner to meet the high bid or to limit the number of persons permitted to bid on the land. These sales would normally be for lands not located near urban expansion areas or with rapidly increasing land values, when there is a need to avoid jeopardizing existing use of adjacent land, to assure compatibility of the possible uses with adjacent lands, and avoid dislocation of existing users. This procedure will allow for limited competitive bidding to protect ongoing use.

3. Direct (without competition) Sales may be used when, in the opinion of the authorized officer, the public interest would be served. Examples include but are not limited to:

- A tract identified for transfer to State or local governments or nonprofit organizations; or

- A tract identified for sale that is an integral part of a project of public importance and speculative bidding would jeopardize the timely completion and economic viability of the project; or

- There is a need to recognize authorized use such as an existing business which would be threatened if the tract were purchased by other than the authorized user; or

- A tract is surrounded by land in non-Federal ownership and does not have public access; or

- The lands support inadvertent unauthorized use or occupancy.

4. When lands have been offered for sale under direct or modified bidding procedures and they remain unsold, then the land will be re-offered by the competitive bidding procedure. In no case will the land be sold for less than fair market value.

Public participation and intergovernmental coordination will be sought and encouraged during the development of each sale schedule. Where a decision is made to dispose of land within a grazing allotment, permittees and lessees will be given a 2-year notice of the planned disposal in accordance with 43 CFR 4110. 4-2. If the 2-year notification period is not waived, the parcel may not be offered for sale until the end of the notification period. Grazing permittees/lessees will receive fair market value (less salvage value) for their interest in authorized permanent rangeland improvements located on public land in accordance with 43 CFR 4120.6-6. If floodplain tracts are designated for disposal, the patent will contain language indemnifying the United States against any claims for loss or injury due to flooding.

RECREATION AND PUBLIC PURPOSES (R&PP) PATENTS

The Mimbres Resource Area will continue to issue patents to qualified governmental and nonprofit entities for public parks, recreational sites, and historical sites under the Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act throughout the life of the Resource Management Plan (RMP). These patents may be issued at less than fair market value as outlined in 43 CFR 2740. Applications for patent of public land under the R&PP Act will be processed as a Mimbres Resource Area priority under the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and will always be subject to public review. No sanitary landfill sites will be patented in the Mimbres Resource Area pursuant to the R&PP Act until regulations implementing the 1988 amendment to the R&PP Act are completed. R&PP applications may be entertained, in either retention or disposal zones; yet, a determination must always be made that the disposal action is in the public's best interest.

MINERAL ESTATE DISPOSAL POLICY

Disposal of the mineral estate is possible under Sections 206 and 209 of FLPMA. It is the policy of the BLM to avoid disposing of the surface estate while retaining the mineral estate unless there are areas of "known mineral value", as defined in 43 CFR 2720.0.5. In areas of "known mineral value", the mineral estate (and the surface estate if substantial interference to development would result) should be retained except as described below.

Prior to any land disposal a "mineral value" determination must be made following a field reconnaissance by a BLM mineral examiner. A mineral report must be written to evaluate the leasable, locatable, and saleable mineral potential of each proposed sale or exchange. Under FLPMA, the conclusion of the mineral examiner will include an opinion as to whether the lands have "known mineral values". If professional judgment concludes that the land does not contain "known mineral values," the surface and subsurface estate may be conveyed, subject to any existing mining claims(s) or mineral leases.

A mining claim of record under Section 314 of FLPMA generally prevents an exchange or sale. If the land is under mining claim, the surface should be retained under Federal ownership or the claim examined for validity. However, a validity examination may be waived and the BLM may proceed with the sale or exchange of both the surface and the mineral estate, subject to the existing mining claim(s) if:

- The land meets the criteria for disposal as determined through land-use planning, and

- The land has no "known mineral value" as determined by a BLM geologist or mining engineer, and
- The prospective patentee is willing to accept defeasible title, preserving whatever rights the mining claimant may have. Conveyance of the surface and mineral estate would be subject to "existing mining claim(s)," allowing the mining claimant to apply for and receive full fee patent if a valid discovery was made prior to the date of transfer under Sections 206 or 209, or alternatively, receive patent to the mineral estate only if discovery were made after the original conveyance.

The BLM will proceed with a sale or exchange only after reasonable efforts have been made to secure relinquishment of the mining claim(s). If the mining claimant opposes the action, the Notice of Realty Action (NORA) protest procedures would apply.

For a direct sale or an exchange, the proponent must be informed early and fully of the potential title conflicts and rights of the mining claimant under the law. The BLM should then proceed only if these conditions are acceptable to the proponent. For a proposed competitive sale, the field office must carefully consider the effect on sale price, likelihood of success, and interests to be served if the sale is made subject to the rights of the mining claimant. If it is clearly in the public interest to proceed, the BLM must secure purchaser waiver of any liability against the United States in the event of subsequent title litigation.

In cases where lands are patented without a reservation of locatable minerals, a FLPMA patentee is believed to have standing to bring private contest (43 CFR 4.450) against the mining claim(s). Should he or she do so, the burden is upon the patentee to prove lack of discovery. If the patentee is successful, or if the claims are abandoned or relinquished, the land would not be open to further location, and the patentee would receive full title to the involved locatable minerals.

Mining claim location and mineral leases for lands in which the surface title has passed under FLPMA disposal authority may be made only after regulations providing for such locations or leasing have been made. Because these regulations have not as yet been issued, lands disposed of under FLPMA are subject to de facto withdrawal. Lands disposed of under FLPMA are not withdrawn from mineral material sales or free-use permits.

All minerals must be reserved if the Federal lands are conveyed out of Federal ownership pursuant to FLPMA disposal authority, except in the limited instances that follow:

1. Sales

a. If the public land proposed for sale is determined to have "known mineral values" for locatable, leasable, or saleable minerals, one of the following courses of action may be taken:

(1) Reject the offer to purchase or cancel the offer of sale.

(2) Dispose of the surface estate and reserve all of the mineral interests to the United States.

(3) Dispose of the surface and convey all or part of the mineral interests under terms set forth in Section 209(b) of FLPMA.

b. If the lands have no "known mineral values," the mineral interests may be simultaneously disposed of with the surface estate under authority of Section 209(b) FLPMA.

2. Exchanges

a. Public land which does not have "known mineral values" may be offered in exchange without any mineral reservation. This will apply whether or not the non-Federal party in an exchange controls the minerals under his or her land.

b. If the public land has some potential for mineral development, reserving the mineral interests is not mandatory as long as the values can be equalized by the payment of money and so long as the payment does not exceed 25 percent of the total value of the land.

In any case, normally it is desirable to keep surface and mineral ownership together in an exchange, whenever possible, to eliminate future problems associated with split-estate ownership.

c. If public land in an exchange is determined to have "known mineral values" for locatable, leasable, or saleable minerals, it may be in the public interest to cancel the offer, depending upon the significance of the deposits. The leasable minerals along can be reserved if significant.

APPENDIX B-2
SET-ASIDES

The following is a list of existing set-asides under Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the City of Las Cruces and Las Cruces School District No. 2 as a result of the Elena Gallegos Grant Exchange Amendment (1982) and Southern Rio Grande MFP Amendment (1986):

LAS CRUCES SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 2
PUBLIC PURPOSE SITES
(DONA ANA COUNTY)

SITE	LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS			
Elementary School No. 1 (21.15 Acres)	Lot 10	Sec. 4	T. 23 S.	R. 2 E.
Elementary School No. 2 (16.40 Acres)	Lot 12	Sec. 10	T. 23 S.	R. 2 E.
Elementary School No. 3 (15 Acres)	S½NE¼NE¼NE¼	Sec. 28	T. 23 S.	R. 2 E.
	SE¼NE¼NE¼	Sec. 28	T. 23 S.	R. 2 E.
Elementary School No. 4 (15 Acres)	SW¼SW¼SW¼	Sec. 17	T. 22 S.	R. 2 E.
	W½SE¼SW¼SW¼	Sec. 17	T. 22 S.	R. 2 E.
Junior High School No. 1 (30 Acres)	W½SW¼SE¼	Sec. 28	T. 22 S.	R. 2 E.
	W½SE¼SW¼SE¼	Sec. 28	T. 22 S.	R. 2 E.
	W½NE¼SW¼SE¼	Sec. 28	T. 22 S.	R. 2 E.
Onate Senior High (41.89 Acres)	Lot 7	Sec. 9	T. 23 S.	R. 2 E.
Senior High (60 Acres)	SE¼NE¼	Sec. 33	T. 22 S.	R. 2 E.
	E½SW¼NE¼	Sec. 33	T. 22 S.	R. 2 E.
Highland Elementary School (18 Acres)	E½NW¼	Sec. 28	T. 22 S.	R. 2 E.
School Site No. 1 (50 Acres)	SW¼NW¼	Sec. 23	T. 22 S.	R. 2 E.
	N½N½NW¼SW¼	Sec. 23	T. 22 S.	R. 2 E.
School Site No. 2 (50 Acres)	S½N½NW¼NW¼	Sec. 18	T. 22 S.	R. 3 E.
	S½NW¼NW¼	Sec. 18	T. 22 S.	R. 3 E.
	SW¼NW¼	(PORTION NORTH OF U.S. 70)		
School Site No. 3 (75 Acres)	S½SW¼NW¼	Sec. 13	T. 24 S.	R. 2 E.
	S½N½SW¼NW¼	Sec. 13	T. 24 S.	R. 2 E.
	N½NW¼SW¼	Sec. 13	T. 24 S.	R. 2 E.
	E½NE¼NE¼SE¼	(ADJACENT TO FRONTAGE ROAD		
	E½SE¼NE¼	Sec. 14	T. 24 S.	R. 2 E.)
School Site No. 4	SE¼S½NE¼NE¼	Sec. 12	T. 24 S.	R. 2 E.

APPENDIX B-2 (Concluded)

CITY OF LAS CRUCES
PUBLIC PURPOSE SITES

SITE	DESCRIPTION	ACREAGE
Joint Facilities		
Fire and Police Departments	T. 22 S., R. 2 E., Sec. 28, W½NW¼	25
Wastewater Treatment Plant		20
Animal Shelter		20
Southwest Mental Health		10
South Fire Station and City Library Annex	T. 22 S., R. 2 E., Sec. 4, Lot 11	13.23
Parks		
South Park	T. 22 S., R. 2 E., Sec. 33, Lot 2	25.64
North Park	T. 22 S., R. 2 E., Sec. 20, NE¼NW¼, E½NW¼NW¼, S½NW¼NW¼NW¼, SW¼NW¼NW¼, N½N½SE¼NW¼	85
North Fire Substation	T. 22 S., R. 2 E., Sec. 20, N½NW¼NW¼NW¼	5
Park on West Park	T. 23 S., R. 1 W., Sec. 27, W½SE¼SE¼	20

APPENDIX B-3
MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

NM-030-10	The Soil Conservation Service and BLM (Cooperative agreement for study sites for the Desert Soil-Geomorphology Project. These sites are 2½ acres each, with the primary purpose of gathering basic information on soils and soil-geomorphic relationships.)
NM-030-11	The NMSU College Ranch and BLM (Cooperative agreement for procedures for management of leasable materials within College Ranch.)
NM-030-13	National Aeronautic and Space Administration and the Corps of Engineers (A cooperative agreement on lands in the northeast portion of the County for low profile management. No new roads, large concentrations of people, or conflicting new uses will be allowed.)
NM-030-14	Southern Rio Grande Council of Governments (COG) and BLM (Involvement by COG in development and revision of land use plans in Dona Ana County.)
NM-030-15	Southern Rio Grande Council of Governments (COG) and BLM (Involvement by COG in development and revision of land use plans in Grant, Hidalgo and Luna Counties.)
NM-030-21	Dona Ana County and BLM (Cooperative agreement to preserve the County's option to expand the Southern Dona Ana County Airport.)
NM-030-23	Las Cruces School District No. 2 and BLM (Memorandum of Understanding to set aside certain parcels for future school sites.)
NM-030-24	City of Las Cruces and BLM (Memorandum of Understanding that identified certain Federal lands for future development needs of the City of Las Cruces.)
NM-030-26	Grant County Commissioners and BLM (Memorandum of Understanding establishing procedures for coordinating the planning and program operations at local level, ensuring that local viewpoints are taken into account in land use decision-making.)
NM-030-27	Luna County Commissioners and BLM (Same as NM-030-26.)
NM-030-28	Hidalgo County Commissioners and BLM (Same as NM-030-26.)
NM-030-31	Dona Ana County Commissioners and BLM (Same as NM-030-26.)
NM-030-37	Dona Ana County and BLM (Memorandum of Understanding closing La Union Landfill to liquid waste, installing a locked gate, posting signs and enforcing.)
NM-030-45	National Aeronautics and Space Administration and BLM (Memorandum of Understanding to recognize land use needs of NASA (4,707.13 acres). Multiple use management to be handled by BLM-hazardous situations handled by NASA. Prohibits installation of domestic or agricultural water wells until groundwater contamination is eliminated.)

APPENDIX C-1
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA ALLOTMENT CATEGORIES

	CATEGORY M (Maintain)	CATEGORY I (Improve)	CATEGORY C (Custodial)
IANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	--Maintain or improve existing situation.	--Improve existing resource conditions.	--Prevent deterioration and manage in a custodial manner.
ENERAL CHARACTERISTICS	--Present ecological range condition is satisfactory. --Present management is satisfactory. --Moderate to high potential for vegetation production and is producing near potential. --Limited or no resource conflicts exist with livestock grazing. --Land status may or may not be considered (includes low percentage of public land, scattered tracts, or checkerboard land patterns within allotments). --Positive return on investment exists.	--Present ecological range condition is unsatisfactory. --Trend is apparently downward. --Present management practices are inadequate to meet long-term objectives. --Moderate to high potential for vegetation production and is producing at low to fair levels. --Resource conflicts are evident with livestock grazing. --Land status may or may not be considered (similar to Category M). --Positive economic return on public investment exists.	--Present ecological range condition is variable. --Vegetative production is relatively low. --Limited potential for improvement. --Limited or no resource conflicts exist with livestock grazing. --No positive return on investment is likely.
ATEGORY CRITERIA	--An allotment must meet all of the following conditions: 1. Has no significant resource conflicts. 2. Has only a moderate potential for improvement in forage production. 3. Has a range condition of 40 or higher and a static or improving range trend.	--An allotment must meet any one of the following 3 conditions: 1. Has a potentially significant resource conflict. 2. Has a high to medium potential for improvement in vegetation. 3. Has a range condition rating of 50 or less and a static or declining range trend.	--An allotment must meet all of the following conditions: 1. Has a low potential for improvement in forage production. 2. Has no significant resource conflicts.
	OTHER CONSIDERATIONS Contains 30 percent or more public land or more than 1,540 acres public land.	OTHER CONSIDERATIONS Contains 30 percent or more public land or more than 1,540 acres public land.	OTHER CONSIDERATIONS Contains less than 30 percent public land or less than 1,540 acres public land.
IANAGEMENT ACTIONS	--Livestock use would remain the same or may be increased. --High degree of management flexibility through consultation. --Low intensity supervision and monitoring. --Range improvements by private investment and range betterment funds. --Development of management plans.	--Livestock use may increase or could be decreased to meet objectives. --Proposals for resolving identified issues and conflicts include: 1. Season of use management. 2. Change in class or kind of livestock. 3. Adjust numbers of livestock. 4. Distribution management, through range improvements or use of salt/supplement. 5. Development of management plans. --High intensity supervision and monitoring.	--Livestock use would remain the same, be excluded or authorized on a seasonal basis. --High degree of management flexibility. --Low intensity supervision and monitoring. --Range improvements by private investment and range betterment funds. --Development of management plans.

ource: BLM Files 1990.

Iote: Any parcel of public land, regardless of size, with an identified significant resource conflict, will qualify for the "I" category.

APPENDIX C-2
PRESENT ALLOTMENT STATUS AND CATEGORY (1992)

Allotment Number	Allotment Name	Total Preference	Management Category
01001	Beacon Hill	459	I
01002	Cottonwood	459	C
01003	Bull Creek	458	C
01004	Maverick Flat	649	I
01005	Mount Baldy	264	M
* 01006	South Pyramid	3,336	I
01007	Blue Creek	3,360	I
01008	Mary E. Butler	1,161	I
01009	Cienega Ranch	2,492	I
01010	Steins Mountain	1,480	I
01011	L. A. Conner	478	I
01012	Gladys Croom North	1,132	I
01013	Gladys Croom South	600	C
01014	Lordsburg Mesa	1,080	C
01015	Thompson Canyon	2,772	I
01016	Thomas R. Dixon	288	I
01017	Clinton E. Dunagan	531	I
01018	Pratt	684	M
01019	Pratt Peak	588	I
01020	Big Cat Ranch	1,909	I
01021	Lightning Dock	540	M
01022	Cottonwood Springs	584	I
01023	Grant Harper	468	I
01024	Shakespeare Ranch	689	M
01025	Rainbow Wash	1,344	I
01026	Gold Hill Canyon	1,380	I
* 01027	George R. Jackson Jr.	972	I
01028	Robert Johns	288	C
01029	Riley Springs	193	M
01030	Alfred Johnson	1,152	I
01031	Muriel F. Johnson	60	M
01032	Four Mile Hill	628	I
01033	Elderberry Canyon	24	M
** 01034-1	Box M Ranch	1,852	I
01035	Junction	120	C
01036	Steeple Rock	552	I
* 01037	Carisle	2,699	I
01038	Jose P. Canyon	276	C
01039	Martin Place	1,848	I
* 01040	Bass Draw	4,084	I
01041	L. B. Pasture	632	I
01042	Bobcat Hill	192	C
01043	Goat Canyon	36	C
* 01044	Granite Gap	1,218	I
01045	Canador Peak	961	I
01046	Croom	468	I
01047	Brushy Mountain	4,158	I

APPENDIX C-2 (Continued)
PRESENT ALLOTMENT STATUS AND CATEGORY (1992)

Allotment Number	Allotment Name	Total Preference	Management Category
01048	Cedar Mountain	1,750	I
01049	NM Department Game & Fish	60	C
01050	Rockhouse Canyon	2,232	I
01051	Redrock Canyon	720	I
01052	Antelope Pass	612	M
01053	West Divide	464	M
01055	R. M. Reynolds Estate	996	I
01057	Swallow Fork Peak	894	I
01058	Clinton E. Dunagan	156	M
01059	Mud Springs Ranch	6,240	I
01060	Road Forks	738	I
01061	Steeple Rock	324	M
01063	East Animas	1,210	I
01064	Andy Peterson	84	M
01065	Hot Wells	96	C
01066	Pacific Western	1,056	I
01068	Playa	533	C
01069	Three Mile Hills	946	I
01070	Lava Flow	1,260	I
01071	Weatherby Ranch	692	I
01072	Gage Siding	298	C
01073	Gillespie Mountain	2,760	I
01074	Table Top Mtn.	216	C
01075	Redrock	180	C
01076	Robert Johns	288	I
01077	Brockman Homestead	348	M
01078	Caprock Mountain	3,950	I
01079	Mondel Flats	182	M
01080	Young Place	12	M
01081	The Raccoon Place	1,464	I
01082	China Pond	648	M
01083	East Divide	480	M
01085	Curry Place	360	M
01086	Burro Springs	3,276	I
01501	Mountain Place	528	M
01502	Croom Mrs. Joe Lease	24	M
01504	Croom Lease	120	M
01505	Clinton Dunagan	192	M
01506	Dunagan L. & C. Co.	816	M
01507	Rand Lease	24	M
01508	Jessie Evans	1,008	M
01509	Gray Ranch Leases	600	M
01510	Alamo Hueco	4,548	I
01511	44 Ranch	108	M
01512	Dupree Canyon	1,140	I
01513	Cottonwood Springs	108	M
01514	Burro Pass	876	M
01515	Kambitch Lease	132	M

APPENDIX C-2 (Continued)
PRESENT ALLOTMENT STATUS AND CATEGORY (1992)

Allotment Number	Allotment Name	Total Preference	Management Category
01516	Kimble Brothers	324	M
01517	Klump Lease	576	M
01518	McCants Lease	36	M
01519	Cascabel Lease	192	M
01520	Post Office Canyon	336	M
01521	Roos Lease	108	M
01522	Richards Lease	180	M
01523	Fiandaca Lease	144	M
01524	Roark Lease	12	M
01526	Owl Canyon	2,511	M
01527	Winkler Lease	504	M
01528	Virginia Slover	312	M
01532	Upshaw Lease	72	M
01533	Woodard Place	36	M
01534	Big Creek	324	M
01536	Darnell Lease	324	M
01537	Davis Lease	24	M
01538	Walker Pasture	204	M
01539	Darnell Billy Lease	156	M
01540	Dunagan's Lease	204	M
01541	Hidalgo Land Company	60	M
01542	Walter Jr. Lease	312	M
01543	Gray Ranch Lease	612	M
01544	Johnson Muriel Lease	372	M
01545	Kerr Lease	24	M
01546	Dunagan C. E. Lease	24	M
01547	Reynolds Lease	12	M
01548	Pendleton Lease	12	M
01549	Timberlake Lease	948	M
01550	Hughes Lease	120	M
01551	Mahan Lease	24	M
01553	Stewart Trust	36	M
01554	Wamel Lease	42	M
01556	Keeler Lease	540	M
01557	Maverick Spring	156	C
01560	Muir Exit Lease	288	M
02001	Edwin and Joyce Allen	156	M
02002	Akela South	432	I
02003	Columbus Community	1,116	C
* 02004	Allen and R. Borde	3,612	I
02005	Florida Ranch	828	M
02006	Victorio	7,788	M
02007	S. Spear Ranch	444	I
02008	Florida Foothills	516	I
02009	Hidden Valley Ranch	564	I
* 02010	Hachita	876	I
* 02011	Apache Hills	1,796	I

APPENDIX C-2 (Continued)
PRESENT ALLOTMENT STATUS AND CATEGORY (1992)

Allotment Number	Allotment Name	Total Preference	Management Category
02012	Butterfield	504	M
* 02013	Burdick Hills	12,004	I
* 02014	Cedar Grove	3,264	I
02015	Hoppy Place	1,032	I
02016	Mountain Ranch	1,248	M
02017	Flying W Ranch	3,612	I
02018	Hermanas Ranch	1,772	I
02019	Kil Ranch	1,200	I
02020	T Bar Ranch	432	M
02021	Blacktop	538	I
02022	U Bar Ranch	7,608	I
02023	Playas Ranch	4,066	M
02024	Heard Ranch	1,340	I
02025	Florida Mtn. Ranch	1,983	I
02026	Sam Teague, et al	288	M
* 02027	Hatchet Ranch	13,869	I
02028	Joe Hervol	276	C
02029	Dogtown	6,336	I
02030	Mimbres Mtn. Rush	1,872	I
02031	Akela North	420	C
02032	W. R. Johnson & Son	3,420	I
02033	San Juan Ranch	2,424	I
02034	Mashed O	12,252	I
02035	Spanish Stirrup	1,500	I
02036	Rainbow Ranch, Inc.	1,848	I
02037	Rascon	516	M
02038	Flying Y	3,975	M
02039	Joe B. Nunn	96	I
** 02040	Goat Mountain	1,613	I
02041	Seventy-Six Draw	552	I
02042	Bisbee Hills	372	I
02043	Shelby Phillips	1,702	I
02044	J. M. Smith	3,008	I
02045	J. E. and Billie Smith	1,920	I
* 02046	Mary S. Smyer	2,362	I
02047	Fred MacKenzie	84	C
02048	Sam Teague, et al	120	C
02049	Seventeen Allotment	204	I
02050	Nadine E. Moore	264	M
02051	Steeple A	2,628	M
02052	Willow Draw	1,192	I
02053	Pol West	1,032	I
02054	Southwell Ranch	2,518	I
02055	Suckerville	492	I
02501	Edwin and Joyce Allen	108	M
02502	Benedict Lease	144	M
02503	Red Mountain Ranch	240	M
02504	Cerro Mesa Ranch	1,056	M
02505	Black Mountain Ranch	420	M

APPENDIX C-2 (Continued)
PRESENT ALLOTMENT STATUS AND CATEGORY (1992)

Allotment Number	Allotment Name	Total Preference	Management Category
02506	Hatcher East Lease	12	M
02508	Hurt Lease	708	M
02509	Hatcher John Lease	60	M
02510	Guaderrama Lease	24	M
02511	Hervol Lease	12	M
02512	Irwin Lease	24	M
02513	Sweetwater Past	84	M
02514	Jones Lease	24	M
02515	Kretek Corporation	24	M
02516	Jesse Mauer	96	M
02517	McCauley J.L. Estate	288	M
02518	Nunn Joe Bill Lease	144	M
02519	Simpson Lease	528	M
02520	Seventy Six Draw	528	M
02521	Richardson Lease	12	M
02522	Salopek Lease	48	M
02523	Smyer Frank Lease	60	M
02524	Speir Lease	612	M
02525	Cerro Mesa Ranch	120	M
02526	Chino Lease	336	M
02527	Black Mountain West	300	M
02528	Butterfield	180	M
02529	POL Lease	12	M
02530	Butterfield Trail	324	M
02531	Baker Lease	84	M
02532	Cienega Ranch	432	M
02533	T Bar Ranch	24	M
02534	Foster Lease	12	M
02535	Burdick Hills West	24	M
02536	Koenig Lease	36	M
02537	Phillips Lease	136	M
02538	Border Ranch Lease	156	M
02539	May Lease	252	M
02540	Flat Ranch Lease	36	M
02541	Acosta Lease	24	M
02542	Southwest Lease	132	M
03001	Aden Hills	1,311	C
03002	Home Ranch	1,501	C
03003	Black Mesa	1,584	C
03004	Radium Springs	96	M
03006	Foster Canyon	12	M
03007	Charles Brewster	192	M
03008	Picacho Peak	985	I
03009	Lazy E Ranch	3,891	I
03010	Juan Bustamante	252	M
03011	Loco	372	C
03012	Sierra Alta Ranch	1,386	M
* 03013	Corralitos Venture	13,860	I
03014	W. F. Hayner	252	I

APPENDIX C-2 (Continued)
PRESENT ALLOTMENT STATUS AND CATEGORY (1992)

Allotment Number	Allotment Name	Total Preference	Management Category
* 03015	Alamo Basin	4,436	I
03016	Pol East	5,688	I
03018	Spring Canyon	456	M
03019	Camilu-Vig, Inc.	382	M
03020	Beacon	4,104	C
03022	La Union	2,528	C
03023	Kilbourne Hole	5,741	I
* 03024	Goodsight Hills	5,981	I
03025	Lois Ellen Gray	360	M
* 03026	Horse Canyon	288	I
03027	Bignell Arroyo	444	I
03028	Hyatt and Hyatt	10,428	I
03029	West Potrillos	8,436	I
03031	Las Uvas Ranch	3,089	M
* 03032	Saddle Mountain	2,640	I
03033	Mt. Riley	5,412	C
03034	Mimms Well	121	M
03035	Nutt Ranch	36	M
03036	Mimms Well	1,080	I
03038	La Mesa	2,844	C
03039	Border Ranch	5,508	I
03040	Altamira Ranch	636	I
03041	Akela	192	C
03042	Frank J. Konyn	12	M
03043	Bill R. Ward	300	M
03044	Western Oil Company	408	C
03045	Chamberino	185	C
03047	Indian Springs	1,700	M
03048	Little Black Mountain	312	C
03056	Afton	1,284	I
* 03058	Palma Park	1,584	I
** 03059	Beck Land & Cattle Co.	516	M
03060	China Draw	216	M
03061	Garfield	444	C
03062	Johnson Spring	756	I
03063	Reserve	1,308	I
03064	Placita Arroyo	504	C
03065	Hille	3,168	I
03066	Rancho Paradiso	192	C
03067	Rincon	960	C
03068	South Well	2,688	I
** 03097	Beck Lease	408	M
03098	China Draw	384	M
04501	Keith Lease	204	M
04502	McCauley F.L. Lease	984	M
04503	Pine Canyon Lease	1,140	M
04504	Onda Lease	504	M

APPENDIX C-2 (Continued)
PRESENT ALLOTMENT STATUS AND CATEGORY (1992)

Allotment Number	Allotment Name	Total Preference	Management Category
04505	Hatcher West Lease	48	M
04506	Hollimon Lease	1,332	M
04507	Brown Lease	12	M
04508	Faywood Lease	12	I
04509	96 Creek Lease	48	M
04510	Crumbley Lease	12	M
04511	De La O Lease	60	M
04512	Delancey Lease	60	M
04513	Upton Mountain Lease	348	M
04514	Delk Lease	888	M
04515	Upton Lease	60	M
04516	Dickerson Lease	1,020	M
04517	2C Ranch Lease	1,068	M
04518	McDonald Lease	168	M
04519	Whiskey Creek	120	M
04520	Foster Lease	60	M
04521	Foy Partnership Lease	132	M
04522	Franks Ranch Lease	1,500	M
04523	White Rock Canyon	708	M
04524	Glenn Lease	48	M
04525	Genevieve Gunter	1,620	M
04526	Harrington Ranch	120	M
04527	Hinton Lease	180	M
04528	Hooker Joe Lease	780	I
04529	Pitchfork Ranch	1,104	M
04530	Casas Grandes Lease	499	M
04531	Hayes Lease	24	M
04532	McCauley Harry Lease	48	M
04533	McCauley Marie Lease	720	M
04534	McCauley J.A. Lease	36	M
04535	Ogilvie Ranch Lease	120	M
04536	Niblett Lease	72	M
04537	Greenwood Ranch	1,008	M
04538	Three Sisters Lease	12	M
04539	Rice and Son Lease	156	M
04540	Richardson Lease	12	M
04541	Spires Cattle Lease	648	M
04542	Strain Lease	12	M
04543	Pugmire Lease	132	M
04544	Boston Hill Lease	12	M
04545	Brockman Lease	24	M
04546	Wesley Brown Lease	156	M
04547	Eby Ranch Lease	1,224	M
04548	Norris Lease	528	M
04549	Moore Nadine Lease	960	M
04550	Hooker Lease	12	M
04551	Johnson Clint Lease	12	M

APPENDIX C-2 (Concluded)
PRESENT ALLOTMENT STATUS AND CATEGORY (1992)

Allotment Number	Allotment Name	Total Preference	Management Category
04552	Moon Ranch	24	M
04553	Gunter Lease	12	M
04554	Capulin Cattle Lease	432	M
04555	Jarrell Ranch Lease	1,136	M
04556	Reich Ranch Lease	24	M
04557	Fierro Lease	24	M
04558	Stone Corral Spring	24	M
04559	Tioga-Marion	12	M
04561	Rafter S	372	M
04598	7XV Ranch Lease	60	I
05013	Baylor Canyon	1,716	I
15001	W. F. Blythe	1,024	I
15002	Dripping Springs	1,759	I
15003	San Augustine Spring	624	M
15004	Anthony Gap	492	I
15006	Dale Hopkins	275	I0
15007	Jeff Isaacks	1,905	I
15008	R. L. Isaacks	396	C
15009	Bishop's Cap	1,593	I
15010	Tex-Line	180	C
15012	Organ	168	M

Source: BLM Files, 1990.

Notes: * Indicates allotments with an Allotment Management Plan.
** Indicates allotments with an Holistic Resource Management Plan.

APPENDIX C-3
GRAZING MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

PRECIPITATION INFLUENCE AND IMPORTANCE

In the Mimbres Resource Area, precipitation during the growing season is the single most important variable in a plant's growth process. In short, effective soil moisture is the supreme limiting factor for plant growth and development. The variability of precipitation, its amount and timing from year-to-year, is a major factor responsible for many grazing management problems. Plant response is almost totally determined upon the timing of the precipitation and subsequent soil moisture.

The major perennial grass species in the Resource Area are warm season plants. About 90 percent of their growth is during the summer growing season of July through September and about 10 percent during late fall and early spring. Occasionally, growth may begin in May or June depending on the advent of rain; but normally this period is dry and the perennial grass species are dormant. On the other hand, plant growth may be retarded or delayed until mid or late August, again depending on rainfall. Ordinarily, growth continues into October before it is stopped by frost. Visible growth often temporarily ceases during the usual 3-month growing season unless rainfall is adequate and well-timed (Paulsen and Ares 1962). Jameson (1965) reports also that the warm-season grasses experience little, if any, growth from late spring through mid-July; and that there is little difference in the effect on these plants whether grazing begins in the period of semi-dormancy or late in the period.

Paulsen and Ares (1962) reported that black grama growth is completed within a relatively short time in the summer, often within 30 days. Flower stalks ordinarily head out and mature within 5 to 7 weeks after growth starts. Hence, in most years, flowering begins early in August, the caryopses are set by late September, and seed dissemination begins in October (Nelson 1934).

Drought is a serious consideration for management on the semi-desert grass-shrub rangelands. Herbel and Gould (1973) emphasized that drought periods are frequent and expected, and that the arid rangelands are very fragile. During 53 years of record on the Jornada Experimental Range, 45 percent or 24 years were classified as drought years. Stands of perennial grasses are often severely reduced by drought. Herbel and Gould further report that any overuse of the key perennial grasses followed by a prolonged drought can result in high mortality.

Results of several studies and reviews of various range literature reports show that the impacts of weather on short-term vegetational changes is often greater than the influence of management (Martin 1973).

Norton (1981) reported that: "In a realistic rangeland situation in the western U.S., the influence of grazing on vegetation production is insignificant in comparison with the effect of climate on production . . .

Paulsen and Ares (1962) reported that the basal area of perennial grasses in the fall correlated best with precipitation for the 15-month period ending September 30 of the year of measurement. Cable and Martin (1975) found in southern Arizona that herbage production in a given summer is related not only to current summer rainfall but to rainfall during the previous growing period. The fact that rainfall in two successive summers is involved in the current summer's perennial grass production means that low rainfall in one summer not only reduces production during the current summer, but it reduces the prospects for the next summer as well. They (Cable and Martin 1975) found the reason for this is that the culms that produce herbage during the current summer originated as basal buds that broke dormancy either during the preceding spring, or more commonly, the preceding fall. Consequently, a dry summer and a dry spring preceding a high-rainfall summer will result in relatively low herbage production because the number of herbage-producing culms is low (Martin 1975). Thus, it takes 2 years to produce a grass crop, and it takes at least 2 years to recover from a 1-year drought. Hence, management decisions should be made with these thoughts in mind.

UTILIZATION

The key indicator of proper stocking is the intensity of use. Martin (1975) notes that on semi-desert grass-shrubs rangelands, the number of cattle grazed should be sufficient to utilize about 40 percent of the perennial grass herbage produced in an average year. This level of grazing will maintain good grass composition over the rangeland. Herbel et al. (1974) points out that grazing limited to no more than 40 percent utilization of the weight of the current year's forage will provide for maintenance or improvement of the desired vegetation. Valentine (1970) suggested grazing less than 40 percent as a desirable management for improving deteriorated black grama rangeland. Paulsen and Ares (1962) found that black grama cannot maintain itself and remain in good productive condition under the impact of repeated droughts by grazing 50-55 percent. They recommended that black grama rangeland be grazed at no more than 30-35 percent use level, and that 50 percent use be applied only to good-condition rangeland.

Clipping studies (Miller 1976 and Gadzia 1979 as reflected by Donart 1980) indicated that just prior to or during seed production is a common phenological stage of growth when a single, severe removal of herbage is detrimental to plant vigor. Grazing or defoliating black grama during or after flowering was most detrimental to the plant. On the other hand, defoliation during the early vegetative growth stage (3 to 4 leaf stage) was not harmful if use was restricted to 65 percent or less (65 percent during this time only results in a 16-30 percent use of total annual production). Jameson (1965) also reported that warm-season perennial grasses should be protected from grazing during the summer growing season if they are to be favored.

Ogden (1980) summarized that the phenological stage of plant growth in combination with an opportunity for regrowth following herbage removal are major considerations in providing for the welfare of the individual plant. Trlica and Cook (1971) found that clipping Utah desert shrubs and grasses late in the growing season so that limited regrowth occurred after defoliation resulted in low carbohydrate reserved in the fall. Menke (1973) found four-wing saltbush was most sensitive to damage by severe defoliation in late summer or early fall at or near seed maturing. Hence, if close herbage removal occurs during the early reproductive stage of growth when opportunity for regrowth is limited, reduced plant vigor is the normal consequence.

FLEXIBILITY OF HERD NUMBERS

Paulsen and Ares (1962), Herbel and Nelson (1969), and Herbel et al. (1974) emphasized that flexibility in livestock numbers is recommended to adjust to the inevitable fluctuating forage crop. Forage production is so variable in the semi-desert region that the year-to-year production may vary from a few pounds to several hundred pounds. In fact, Herbel et al. (1969) noted that a fluctuating forage crop is a fact-of-life in this area. He further states that a rangeland unit stocked at a constant level, based on average years, is to invite destruction of the rangeland resource. Herbel and Nelson (1973) recommend a flexible stocking plan whereas the base herd would be comprised of not more than 55 to 60 percent breeding animals, and the remainder of the herd would be yearlings and replacement heifers. For despite the application of the best known techniques of rangeland management, periods of low forage production often occur when stocking must be reduced (Paulsen and Ares 1962). Norton (1981) also recognizes that while stocking rates remain static, grazing pressure increases in years of low forage production. Of course under these conditions, forage utilization would approach maximum use, which would likely depress subsequent production. Conservative stocking levels set for years of average production would naturally reduce grazing pressure during years of low forage production.

APPENDIX C-3
UTILIZATION CRITERIA FOR IMPORANT FORAGE SPECIES[a/]

PLANT PHENOLOGY Growth Stages	LATE DORMANCY January thru Sustained Green up	VEGETATIVE Early (3-4 leaf) (Late 5-6 leaf)	FLOWERING Early Boot Late Boot Seed Shatter	EARLY DORMANCY November-January
Grasses Black grama *Bouteloua eriopoda* Warm-season	Graze to desirable residue or use level-generally not more than 50-55% on good condition rangeland (leave 3" stubble height). Graze only 30-35% of total annual forage production on deteriorated rangeland (leave a 4" stubble height).	Grazing during 3-4 leaf stage is not detrimental to plant as later in the growing season. By grazing only up through this stage allows the plant ample regrowth time to complete its physiological needs. Early use of the species has less impact on plant vigor than late season or continuous defoliation. Rest whenever possible Defoliation at 65% use during this period removes only 30% of total plant production for year. However, this degree of use significantly reduces the number of stolons produced during the previous growing season, but does not remove following year's stolon production. Black grama is not highly preferred by cattle during the summer growing season when other more palatable species are available. On ranges below 5,000 feet, black grama may not comprise 10% of the diet during the summer except under drought conditions or unfavorable rangeland conditions.	Rest--------resting throughout the growing season, especially during and after flowering, is critically important to the improvement of black grama. Defoliation during this period of growth is most detrimental to plant vigor and vegetative reproduction potential. Plants clipped during or after flowering or continuously through the growing season produced less herbage the following year than plants defoliated during the vegetative growth stage. Herbage production is highly variable from year to year. Current year's herbage is dependent on effective precipitation from July-September and also on the previous growing seasons rainfall and production. When the species is properly managed, associated plants will grow well. Thus grazing no more than 40% of current year's herbage production by weight; deferring from grazing during the growing season; and given consideration to drought stress and the fact that it takes at least 2 years to recover from a 1-year drought are management strategies that will contribute to improving the stand. Ninety percent of its growth is produced during the rainy season (July-August-September). Reproduction is almost entirely by stolons and tillering. Minimal viable seed is produced, and unfavorable climatic conditions inhibit germination. Canfield (1939) noted that the period of growth varied from 64 to 176 days, but approximated 98 days in most years. Physiologically, most height growth is completed within a relatively short time in the summer, often within 30 days. Flower stalks ordinarily head out and mature within 5 to 7 weeks after growth starts. In most years, flowering begins early in August, the caryopses are set by late September, and seed dissemination begins in October.	Grazing 30% of total annual production at this time is a highly desirable management practice for improving deteriorated black grama rangeland (leave about 4" stubble height). Use during this period and on through late dormancy allows utilization of the plant when it is least susceptible to grazing injury. The plant is highly nutritious at all seasons of the year; growth activity of plant in winter increases its palatability. Black grama may comprise as high as 62% of cattle diet during this time.

APPENDIX C-3 (CONTINUED)
UTILIZATION CRITERIA FOR IMPORTANT FORAGE SPECIES[a/]

Sideoats grama ***Bouteloua curtipendula*** Warm-season	Graze or utilization up to 50% of total annual production of plant.	Rest--------------------------------- Resting during the growing season (July, August, September) is critical for replenishing root reserves and providing for new root growth. The plant is highly palatable and nutritious. Greens up somewhat earlier in the spring than other gramas.	Rest-- Resting during the growing season (July, August, September) is critical for replenishing root reserves and providing for new root growth. The plant is highly palatable and nutritious. Greens up somewhat earlier in the spring than other gramas.	Use from early through late dormancy is a preferred management strategy if improvement of the species is desired.
Blue grama *Bouteloua gracilis* Warm-season	Graze or utilization up to 50% of total annual forage production of plant.	Rest---------------------------------- Rest during the growing season, mainly July and August, depending on effective soil moisture or precipitation timing. Highly palatable to all livestock. It is a fast summer-growing species and matures in about 60-70 days after summer rains start. Produces abundant forage under favorable conditions.	Rest-- Rest during the growing season, mainly July and August, depending on effective soil moisture or precipitation timing. Highly palatable to all livestock. It is a fast summer-growing species and matures in about 60-70 days after summer rains start. Produces abundant forage under favorable conditions.	Graze through late dormancy.
Mesa dropseed *Sporobolus flexuosus* Warm-season	Graze--Moderate use of 40-50% is desirable.	Grazing 60% up to or during this time, which will remove about 20% of the total annual forage production, allows recovery of plants before growing season ends. Grazing is less detrimental to the plant at this time than later in the growing season. Can withstand heavier use prior to flowering than during the remainder of the growing season.	Rest-- Defoliation during flowering or continuously throughout the growing season significantly reduces production the following growing season. However, the species is very opportunistic related to effective soil moisture thereby responding rapidly to favorable conditions. (Likely if adequate growth and moisture conditions are present, it probably cannot seriously hurt the plant.) Therefore, the plant should be used when favorable climatic and growth conditions are present. It is a prolific seed producer. Best used for beef production during the growing season as plant becomes unpalatable and low in nutrients at maturity.	Graze--Moderate use of 40-50% is desirable.
Bush muhly *Muhlenbergia porteri* Warm-season	Graze at moderate rate of 40-50% available forage.	Rest---------------------------------- or if grazed during this growth period, defoliation prior to flowering is superior to continuous or late defoliation for maintaining plant vigor. Graze no more than 35% of total annual production at this time. Grazing during the growing season is more likely beneficial for beef production, as the plant decreases in palatability and nutrition when it matures.	Rest-- or if grazed during this growth period, defoliation prior to flowering is superior to continuous or late defoliation for maintaining plant vigor. Graze no more than 35% of total annual production at this time. Grazing during the growing season is more likely beneficial for beef production, as the plant decreases in palatability and nutrition when it matures.	Graze at 35-40% is allowable.

APPENDIX C-3 (CONTINUED)
UTILIZATION CRITERIA FOR IMPORTANT FORAGE SPECIES[a]

Tobosa *Hilaria mutica* Warm-season	Rest or graze lightly, as mature plants are rank, coarse, and unpalatable. Grazing to 50-55% during dormancy not harmful to species, over-utilization would occur on other favored management species.	Graze-------------------------------- The species is best used during the summer growing season while the plant is most palatable. (Period of active growth is similar to black grama.) Utilization of 40-55% is desirable to maintain a vigorous stand. Tobosa pastures can be used to round out required rest on other favored management species.	Graze-- The species is best used during the summer growing season while the plant is most palatable. (Period of active growth is similar to black grama.) Utilization of 40-55% is desirable to maintain a vigorous stand. Tobosa pastures can be used to round out required rest on other favored management species.	Rest or graze, but mature plants are rank, coarse, and unpalatable, so best use will be made when grazed during periods of active growth.
Alkali sacaton *Sporobolus airoides* Warm-season	Graze or rest.	Graze--------------------------------- Best used during summer growing season when palatability and nutrition of plant is at highest level. However, if improvement of stand is desired, periodic summer growing season rest is required.	Graze--------------------------------------- Best used during summer growing season when palatability and nutrition of plant is at highest level. However, if improvement of stand is desired, periodic summer growing season rest is required.	Plant can withstand 60-65% use during dormancy. The species matures coarse and rank, but cattle are found to do well anyway.
Shrubs Fourwing saltbush *Atriplex canescens* Cool-season	Graze-species best used during dormant period.	Rest or very light use[b]	Most sensitive to defoliation in late summer or early fall at or near seed maturity. Grazing should be held to about 40% use of total annual forage production.	The species is best grazed during the dormancy periods. Palatability and nutrition remain high during nongrowth period.
Winterfat *Ceratoides lanata* Cool-season	Graze--species best used during dormancy.	Rest or very light use[b]	Graze no more than 35% of total annual forage production to maintain vigor and production. Cannot tolerate overuse during the growth period, especially during flowering. Most desirable management is to rest in the late growing season if moisture is available.	Grazing during dormancy is preferred management when possible. Can be grazed heavier during dormancy.
Mountain mahogany *Cercocarpus montanus* Cool-season	Graze	Rest or light use[b]	Rest or light use	Can withstand heavy use during dormancy, however, should not consistently be grazed at heavy intensity.
Desert ceanothus *Ceanothus greggii* Cool-season	Graze	Rest or light use[b]	Rest or light use	Graze--utilization should be no more than 40%.

Sources: Donart, 1980; Martin, 1975; Herbel, Steger, and Gould, 1974; Valentine, 1970; Paulsen and Ares, 1962; Miller and Donart, 1979; Cable and Martin, 1975; and Miller, 1976.

Notes: a/ To be used as a guide only in establishing rangeland grazing practices--is not a grazing system. Desert rangeland plants respond, physiologically, more to precipitation time and subsequent effective soil moisture than to any calendar month or date. Therefore, management of any forage species must be flexible enough to allow for such variation of year to year precipitation patterns. Thus grazing systems or treatments following a set calendar schedule in the Planning Area will meet with little or no success.

b/ Vegetation leaf stages (3-4 and 5-6) not applicable.

APPENDIX D
DESIRED PLANT COMMUNITY

The desired plant community concept used in the Las Cruces District, Mimbres Resource Area is defined as a plant community that produces the kind, proportion, and amount of vegetation necessary for meeting or exceeding the land use plan goals and activity plan objectives established for the site. The desired plant community becomes the vegetation management objective for the site. The desired plant community must be consistent with the site's capability to produce the identified community through land treatments such as fire and chemical brush control and grazing management.

Through the soils mapping done on all Federal land within the Resource Area during the 1977 to 1981 range surveys, there were 26 range sites identified using the Soil Conservation Service range site guidelines. These 26 range sites were then grouped into like sites using the vegetation potential described for the range site, soil types and occurrence within the Resource Area. An interdisciplinary team, using the above information decided on the optimal mix of perennial grasses, forbs and shrubs for each of the 12 groupings of range sites. A range of desired plant mixtures (desired vegetation) were developed and applied to **THE THREE CATEGORIES OF VEGETATION GROWTH FORMS (GRASS, FORB, SHRUB)** consistent with the overall goals of **THE PROPOSED PLAN**. Species composition for desired plant communities would be developed during the activity planning stage taking into account all the needs and uses of that particular site.

Using Geographic Information System (GIS) capabilities, a printout of all 26 range sites with the existing 46 possible aspect vegetation subtypes was produced. The range site/vegetation combinations were refined into 16 possible combinations. Brush species response to chemical control played a major role in the shrub species groupings. These chemical treatment areas were delineated using soils types, percent slope and distance from perennial streams as parameters. Each of the 16 types were given a desired vegetation prescription for that site. Several types, such as riparian, arroyo areas, and pinyon-juniper/oak woodland/conifer remain the same through all Alternatives. The existing baseline data on the vegetation types and range sites are on file in the Mimbres Resource Area, Las Cruces District as are the GIS maps which were developed for each Alternative showing the possible differences in desired plant community by Alternative.

APPENDIX E
CULTURAL RESOURCES

History and Inventory

The objective of the cultural resource program is to manage cultural resources on public land in a manner that protects and provides for their proper use. Cultural resources include archaeological, historic, and socio-cultural properties. Archaeological evidence indicates that portions of the Mimbres Resource Area have been occupied continuously for the past 10,000 years.

A total of 3,100 archaeological sites are recorded from Luna, Dona Ana, Grant, and Hidalgo counties. Only approximately 2 percent of public land has been subjected to Class III cultural inventories.

PALEOINDIAN (10,000-5,000 B.C.)

The Paleoindian period is generally divided into three cultural traditions: Clovis, Folsom, and Plano, with Clovis the earliest. Paleoindian occupations within the Mimbres Resource Area are known primarily from numerous reports of isolated Paleoindian projectile point surface finds. The Paleoindian period is traditionally characterized as an adaptation to the hunting of large animals or "big game hunting." Paleoindian period sites are rare within the Resource Area. The Mockingbird Gap site, which was excavated in 1968, is a Clovis period site located approximately 30 miles southeast of Socorro, New Mexico and is outside of the Mimbres Resource Area. Paleoindian material remains **OUTSIDE THE MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA** have been associated with numerous faunal remains including horse, tapir, camel, cervids, canids, antelope, jackrabbit, bison, and mammoth. Most Folsom and Plano period artifacts are reported from coppice dune deflated areas within the Mimbres Resource Area (LeBlanc and Whalen 1980). One Paleoindian projectile point, a Midland point, was recently recovered from New Mexico State University (NMSU) archaeological field school excavations at Cooke's Spring near Fort Cummings within the Mimbres Resource Area. The Cloverdale Creek site in Hidalgo County is believed to contain a Folsom component. It has been suggested that Folsom period sites will occur most commonly in association with playas within the Mimbres Resource Area. Additional research into Paleoindian period settlement patterns, subsistence strategies, and social organization within the Mimbres Resource Area is needed.

ARCHAIC (5,000 B. C. - A.D. 0.)

Climatic change in the form of decreasing moisture is generally believed to have been responsible for the change from the Paleoindian to an Archaic adaptation. Much of what is known about the Archaic period in the region is from the analysis of perishable artifactual material from Tularosa and Cordova Caves in the Gila National Forest and from Bat Cave in the Socorro Resource Area. In addition, numerous excavations have been conducted at Archaic period open sites within the Mimbres Resource Area. Traditionally, the Archaic period has been characterized as small extended family groups or bands utilizing hunting and gathering subsistence strategies based on small game and intensive seasonal gathering of a wide variety of plant resources. Recovered Archaic remains include basketry, cordage, sandals, and a wide variety of artifacts manufactured from fur, feather, hide, wood, stone, and bone. Archaic groups are believed to have been highly mobile and essentially nonagricultural. Archaic remains are often represented by lithic concentrations, occasional ground stone artifacts, and small hearth features (LeBlanc and Whalen 1980). Thousands of Archaic period campsites and specialized activity areas are believed to occur within the Mimbres Resource Area.

DEVELOPMENTAL PUEBLO AND PUEBLO (A.D. 0-1540)

Mogollon-Mimbres Sequence

The Mogollon sequence contains three relatively distinct subdivisions, the Early Pithouse, Late Pithouse, and Classic period. Archaeological sites which are representative of all three of these time periods occur in relatively large numbers within the Mimbres Resource Area.

The Early Pithouse period is characterized by the beginnings of sedentary, horticulture based villages. The pithouse structures are round and the associated pottery is generally plainware. Extremely large "ceremonial" structures also occur during this period. Village size varies widely from 1 to 80 pithouse structures. Villages in this period are usually located on knolls, ridges, or mesa tops which are relatively inaccessible.

The Late Pithouse period is marked by a change in pithouse shape from round to rectangular. Villages are horticulture-based and situated on river terraces, low ridges, and relatively accessible areas. Population increases are indicated by increased village size.

In the Classic Mimbres or Surface Pueblo period, population size again increases. Structures are constructed above ground. Irrigation agriculture was probably employed. Decorated and painted pottery is common during this period. This period ends suddenly at approximately A.D. 1150 (LeBlanc and Whalen 1980).

Animas/Black Mountain Phase

In the archaeological record, the post-Mimbres period reflects changes in settlement pattern, trade relations, and social organization. The post-Mimbres period is characterized as a large population living in large sites leaving large areas uninhabited. Village sites consist of room blocks constructed around central plazas. Room size increases from the previous Mimbres period. The construction technique is puddled adobe with occasional small cobbles. Floors and walls are plastered adobe. Some of the Animas/Black Mountain Phase cultural traits are similar to those found in the Casa Grandes region of Mexico but the exact nature of the relationship is unclear (LeBlanc and Whalen 1980).

Salado Period

Animas and Salado period sites are characterized by similar construction techniques, but with the Salado sites having generally larger room blocks. In many of the Salado sites which have been tested, the villages appear to have been rapidly abandoned. Dates from Salado sites range from AD 1375 to 1450. Irrigation agriculture may have been practiced in the Salado period (LeBlanc and Whalen 1980). The post-Mimbres periods are not well defined in the Mimbres Resource Area, and further research is needed.

Jornada Mogollon

The extreme eastern edge of the Mimbres Resource Area, east of the Rio Grande is within the range of the Jornada Branch of the Mogollon. The Jornada Mogollon is also divided into the Pithouse and Pueblo periods. In the Jornada and Mimbres areas, population size increased from the early to the late Pithouse period. Very large ceremonial or communal structures are rare in the Jornada area. In both areas, the Pueblo cultures arise from in the pithouse cultures. Pueblos replaced pithouses in the Mimbres area by AD 1000 but not until AD 1200 in the Jornada area. In general, Pueblo development began sooner and reached greater heights in the Mimbres region than in the Jornada. In the Jornada area, Pueblo societies continued without significant change until their abandonment around AD 1400 (LeBlanc and Whalen 1980).

Developmental Pueblo and Pueblo Jornada Mogollon

Student archaeologists from NMSU, under the direction of Dr. Steadman Upham, excavated several small rock shelters in the Organ Mountains from 1982 through 1985. The field excavations demonstrated an occupation of the shelters beginning approximately A.D. 250 and lasting for 1,000 years. These sites would be representative of the Jornada Mogollon culture period.

THE HISTORIC PERIOD (A.D. 1540 TO PRESENT)

The first European conquest of New Mexico was initiated by Francisco Vasquez de Coronado in 1540-1542. Coronado arrived in New Mexico with

230 Spanish soldiers, 800 Indians, and 3 women. In the Rio Grande Valley, Coronado found pueblos and Indians who were weavers, potters, and farmers (Athearn 1989). These historic period pueblo groups are generally believed to have been associated with Mansos, Suma Jocome, and Jano culture groups. In 1581, the Rodreiquez-Chamuscado expedition entered New Mexico and observed what are believed to be various Apachean groups.

In 1598, Juan de Onate lead a large expedition along the Rio Grande and across the dreaded and almost waterless 70-mile long stretch of the Camino Real known as the Jornada del Muerto. A system of Spanish caravans maintained a route which passed through the Mimbres Resource Area between Chihuahua City and Santa Fe. In 1610, a Spanish capital was established in Santa Fe. In 1680, the northern pueblos led a successful revolt and the Spanish were forced to retreat down the Camino Real to El Paso del Norte. In 1692, Diego de Vargas Zapata initiated a successful reconquest of New Mexico. An El Paso del Norte census in that same year (1692) documented a population of 382 contained in 50 households. France, Spain, and Mexico administered New Mexico as a province until the war with the United States in 1846.

The Spanish administered New Mexico as a colony until the war with the United States in 1846. After the signing of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, numerous permanent settlers located in Mesilla. Fort Filmore was established near Mesilla in 1851 and Fort Cummings near Deming in 1863 to protect the region from Apache depredations. A boundary dispute was settled with Mexico by the Gadsden Purchase of 1854 which made much of what is now the Mimbres Resource Area a part of the United States. The Butterfield Overland Mail and Stage Line was established in 1858 and allowed passengers to ride from St. Louis, Missouri to San Diego, California. The entire route from El Paso to Arizona lies within the Mimbres Resource Area. In 1861, Confederate Colonel John R. Baylor captured Fort Filmore for the Confederacy. In 1862, the confederates fled the area when 1,400 troops of the California Column, Union Army, began arriving in New Mexico. Emigrants heading west to California followed the Southern Emigrant Trail through the Mimbres Resource Area until 1881 when the railroad was completed across the Mimbres Resource Area. The coming of the railroad opened up the Mimbres Resource Area to additional settlement and fairly large scale mining development.

CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT GOAL SYSTEM

The major cultural resources program input into the Resource Management Plan (RMP) process is to form management objectives for specific cultural resource special management areas (SMAs). These management goals are general in nature and normally do not call for specific on-the-ground actions. The three goal categories that have been incorporated into this planning effort include (1) Management for Public Values, (2) Management for Conservation, and (3) Management for Research Potential.

1. Management for Public Values

The goal of this category is the management of sites, locations, features, and objects identified as having attributes which contribute to maintaining the heritage, belief systems, folkways, and existence of a social or cultural group. Considerations for management in this category also include access to and maintenance of locations, sites, features, and objects of traditional religious or spiritual value; use and possession of sacred objects; and the freedom to worship through ceremonials and other traditional rites.

2. Management for Conservation

The goal of this category is the management of areas, sites, locations, districts, or features by removing them from consideration for scientific or historic study which would result in their physical alteration.

Properties managed under this goal could also possess one or more of these attributes: uniqueness or relative scarcity of type, class, condition, affiliation; research potential that surpasses current state of the art; or singular historic importance or architectural interest. Such cultural resource properties would remain in this category until specified provisions are met in the future.

3. Management for Information Potential

The goal of this category is the management of cultural properties so that they would remain suitable for consideration as the subject of scientific or historical study utilizing research techniques currently available. Such study could, if warranted by an approved research design, result in the controlled physical alteration of that property. A cultural property in this category need not necessarily be conserved in consideration of an approved research or data recovery (mitigation) proposal.

Management under this category could allow controlled experimental study which could also result in physical alteration to the property. This work could be performed by the BLM or other entities concerned with the management of cultural properties for purposes of obtaining specific information leading to a better understanding of kinds and rates of natural or human-caused deterioration, effectiveness of protection measures, and similar lines of inquiry which would ultimately aid in the management of cultural resources.

CULTURAL RESOURCE USE CATEGORY SYSTEM

In addition to the use allocation recommendations made through management goal category assignment during the land-use planning (RMP) stages, another vital step occurs during the next, more specific planning state, the Cultural Resource Management Plan or activity plan. This step or allocation commitment comes after the completion of the RMP which establishes the general management goals for a particular site or combination of sites. The activity plan commits specific actions and generally assigns (as part of the activity planning process) each site to one or more of the following use categories.

1. "Current scientific use" means that a cultural property is the subject of an ongoing scientific or historical study or project, under permit, at the time of evaluation. Upon completion of that study or project, the cultural property will be assigned to one of the other use categories.

2. "Potential scientific use" means that a cultural property is presently eligible for consideration as the subject of scientific or historical study utilizing research techniques currently available, including study which would result in its physical alteration. It need not be conserved in the face of an appropriate research or data recovery (mitigation) proposal.

3. "Conservation for future use" means that a cultural property is not presently eligible for consideration as the subject of scientific or historical study which would result in its physical alteration. Reasons may include a scarcity of similar cultural properties, research potential that surpasses the current state of the art, singular historic importance or architectural interest. It is worthy of segregation from other land or resource uses which would threaten the maintenance of its present condition, and that it will remain in this use category until specified provisions are met in the future.

4. "Management use" means that a cultural property is eligible for controlled experimental study which would result in its physical alteration. Such studies could be conducted by the BLM or other entities concerned with the management of cultural properties to obtain specific information which would ultimately aid in the management of cultural properties.

5. "Socio-cultural use" means that a cultural resource is perceived by a specified social or cultural group as having attributes which contribute to maintaining the heritage or existence of that group, and is to be managed in a way that takes those attributes into account, as applicable.

6. "Public use" means that a cultural property is eligible for consideration as an interpretive exhibit-in-place, a subject of supervised participation in scientific or historical study, a subject of unsupervised collecting under permit, or related educational and recreation uses by members of the general public.

7. "Discharged use" means that a cultural property (previously qualified for assignment to any of the first six categories) no longer possesses the qualifying characteristics for that use (or for assignment to an alternative use), that records pertaining to it represent its only remaining importance, and that its location no longer presents a management constraint for competing land uses.

APPENDIX F-1
RECREATION OPPORTUNITY SPECTRUM

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) (BLM Manual 8320) provides a framework for stratifying and defining classes of outdoor recreation opportunities spanning the entire spectrum. The spectrum ranges essentially natural, low-use areas (resource-dependent recreation opportunities) to highly developed, intensive use areas (facility/vehicle-dependent recreation opportunities).

Recreation opportunities are expressed in terms of three principal components: the types of environmental settings available, the variety of activities possible, and the types of experiences that can be achieved through participation.

The primary determinant of ROS Classes is the setting opportunity. It describes the overall outdoor recreation environment where activity occurs, influences the types of recreation activity that can occur, and ultimately determines the resulting types of experience that can be achieved.

Activities are not bound to opportunity classes and most activities can take place in some shape or form throughout the spectrum. However, general activity opportunities can be described per ROS class.

A particular type of experience is related to the environmental setting and activity engaged in and also in individual differences based on a number of extraneous variables (such as background, education, sex, age, place of residence). The opportunity for a particular experience can be described in a general way.

DELINEATION OF ROS CLASSES

After determining the setting, activity, and experience opportunities, areas are assigned to one of six ROS Inventory Classes. Each class is delineated to identify the available outdoor recreation opportunity that exists. The six ROS classes are described in the following section.

PRIMITIVE CLASS

The setting opportunity consists of contiguous areas of about 5,000 acres, lying more than 3 miles from the nearest point of motor vehicle access. These areas are essentially unmodified natural landscapes, where there is little evidence of other people and almost completely free of management controls. Activity opportunities include overnight backpack camping, nature photography, backcountry hunting, canoeing, and snowshoeing. The experience opportunity consists of the chance to achieve a strong sense of solitude and isolation from human civilization, to feel as one with nature, and to encounter a great degree of personal risk and challenge.

SEMI-PRIMITIVE NONMOTORIZED CLASS

The setting opportunity consists of contiguous areas of about 2,500 acres, lying at least ½ mile from the nearest point of motor vehicle access. The areas possess a predominantly natural landscape, where there are some evidences of other people, and where there are very few management controls. Activity opportunities include backpack camping, nature viewing, backcountry hunting, canoeing, and cross-country skiing. The experience opportunity consists of the possibility to avoid the sights and sounds of people, achieve a high degree of interaction with nature and to experience a great deal of personal risk and challenge.

SEMI-PRIMITIVE MOTORIZED CLASS

The setting opportunity consists of contiguous areas of about 2,500 acres, sometimes along unmaintained two-track routes. The areas have a mostly natural landscape where there are some evidences of other people (but numbers and frequency of contact seem to remain low) and where there are few management controls.

Activity opportunities include day hunting, climbing, vehicle trail riding, mountain biking, hiking, and snowmobiling. The experience opportunity consists of the chance to enjoy isolation from human civilization and technology (the lack of contacting other people), achieving a high degree of interaction with the natural environment, and feeling a moderate degree of personal risk and challenge.

ROADED NATURAL CLASS

The setting opportunity consists of areas alongside or near improved and maintained roads, with naturally appearing but human modified landscapes where there are often evidences and moderate numbers of people, and were there are visible management controls and developments. Activity opportunities consist of a mixture of resource and facility/vehicle-dependent recreation and generally include wood gathering, downhill skiing, fishing, off-highway vehicle driving, interpretative uses, motorboating, and vehicle camping. The experience opportunity consists of the chance to perceive a sense of security in the moderate number of visitor encounters and intermittent human developments available and the chance for some personal risk taking and challenges.

RURAL CLASS

The setting opportunity consists of areas alongside or near paved highways, with heavily modified landscapes where there are considerable evidences or numbers of other people, and where management controls and developments are often seen. Activity opportunities consist of mostly facility/vehicle-department recreation and generally include vehicle sightseeing, horseback riding, on road bicycling, golf, swimming, walking, picnicking, and outdoor competitive games. The experience opportunity consists of the chance to enjoy modern visitor conveniences, moderate to high levels of interactions with other people and a feeling of security from personal risk.

URBAN CLASS

The setting opportunity consists of areas near paved highways, where the natural landscape is dominated or replaced by human made developments, where there are great numbers and evidences of other people, and where management controls are numerous and dominant. Activity opportunities are facility/vehicle-dependent and generally include concerts, wave pools, amusement parks, zoo/fair visits, vehicle racing facilities, spectator sports, and indoor competitive games. The experience opportunity consists of the availability of numerous modern conveniences, being entertained, encountering large numbers of people, interacting with an exotic and manicured environment, and a feeling of being very secure with personal risk subdued.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES FOR ROS CLASSES

PRIMITIVE CLASS OBJECTIVE

The primitive class is managed to be essentially free from evidence of humans, human-induced restrictions, and on-site controls. Motorized vehicle use within the area is not permitted. The area is managed to maintain an extremely high probability of experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of others (not more than three to six group encounters per day), independence, closeness to nature, self-reliance through the application of backcountry skills, and an environment that offers a high degree of challenge and risk.

Backcountry use levels and management of renewable resources is subject to the protection of backcountry recreational values. Frequency of managerial contact with users is very low.

SEMI-PRIMITIVE NONMOTORIZED CLASS OBJECTIVE

Semi-primitive nonmotorized areas are managed to be largely free form the evidence of humans, human-induced restrictions, and on-site controls. Motorized vehicle use is prohibited (except by permit). Limited facilities for the administration of livestock and visitor use are allowed, but off-site administration is encouraged. Project designs should stress protection of natural values and maintenance of the integrity of a predominantly natural environment. Areas are managed to maintain a good probability of experiencing minimum contact with others, self-reliance through the application of backcountry skills, and an environment that offers a high degree of risk and challenge.

Backcountry use levels and management of renewable resources are dependent on maintaining ecosystems comparable to naturally occurring ecosystems. The consumption of renewable resources is subject to the protection of backcountry recreational values. Grazing is allowed, subject to restrictions placed on use of motorized vehicles. Facilities associated with grazing are limited to those necessary for maintaining existing numbers, adequate distribution, and seasons of use, consistency with allotment management plans. Mineral development is subject to valid existing rights. Frequency of managerial contact with users is low.

SEMI-PRIMITIVE MOTORIZED CLASS OBJECTIVE

Semi-primitive motorized areas are managed to provide a naturally appearing environment. Evidence of humans, restrictions, and management controls are present but subtle.

Motorized vehicle use is permitted. Concentration of users should be low. On-site interpretative facilities, low standard roads and trails, trailheads, and signing should stress the natural environment in their design and be the minimum necessary to achieve resource objectives.

The consumption of natural resources is allowed. In the review of plans of operations, utility corridors, rights-of-way, and other surface-disturbing projects, effort is taken to reduce their impacts on the natural environment. Frequency of managerial contact with visitors is low to moderate on trails and primitive roads.

ROADED NATURAL CLASS OBJECTIVE

Roaded natural areas are managed to provide a natural-appearing environment with moderate evidences of the sights and sounds of humans. Motorized use is permitted. Concentration of users is moderate with evidence of other users prevalent. Resource modification an utilization practices are evident, but harmonize with the natural environment. Development of facilities for motorized use is provided for in any proposed construction standards and designs of facilities.

Placement of rights-of-way, utility corridors, management facilities, and other surface-disturbing activities would be favored over placement in semi-primitive nonmotorized or semi-primitive motorized areas when applicable. The consumption of natural resources is allowed except at proposed of developed trailheads, developed recreation areas, and where geological, cultural, or natural features are interpreted as major themes. Frequency of managerial contact with visitors is moderate.

RURAL CLASS OBJECTIVE

Rural areas are managed to provide a setting that is substantially modified in foreground and background views with moderate to high evidences of the sights and sounds of civilization. Motorized use is permitted. Concentration of users is sometimes high with the evidences of other users being substantial. Resource modification and utilization practices are sometime dominant in a somewhat manicured environment. Standards for road, highway, and facility development are high for the purposes of user convenience. Frequency of managerial contact with visitors is moderate to high.

URBAN CLASS OBJECTIVE

The Mimbres Resource Area does not manage for urban types of recreation opportunities.

APPENDIX F-2
IMPLEMENTATION OF ORV DESIGNATIONS

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this appendix is to provide general information about Bureau of Land Management (BLM) policy and procedures for off-road vehicle (ORV) designations. BLM Manuals 8341 contain a more complete discussion. ORV designations are administrative, not Congressional, which allow management flexibility in order to be responsive to changes in the environment.

OBJECTIVES

All public land must be designated as "open," "limited," or "closed" to motorized vehicle use to meet public demand or needs, to protect resources and the safety of public land users, and to minimize conflicts among the various public land users and adjacent landowners. Additionally, existing ORV designations are evaluated and revised, if necessary, whenever existing Management Framework Plans (MFPs) are amended or when Resource Management Plans (RMPs) are prepared, revised, or amended.

POLICY

ORV designations are completed as an integral part of the normal BLM planning system unless problems or conflicts preclude adhering to the planning schedules.

ORV designation allocations are not contingent on the BLM land-use planning system.

Notices of ORV designations are published in the Federal Register within 1 year after completion of decisions allocating ORV use.

Designations apply to all motorized vehicles as defined by 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 8340.0-5(a) regardless of how the vehicles are being used. Only those vehicles excluded from that definition are allowed in closed areas or limited areas where use is prohibited by designation order. Necessary nonemergency use associated with BLM licenses, leases, permits, or sales may be authorized as an exclusion from that definition [see 43 CFR 8340.0-5(a)(3)] only if feasible alternatives have been exhausted and the use is compatible with established resource management objectives. Reasonable restrictions on the types of vehicles, time of use, routes, or amount of use may be required in the authorization. Request for mineral exploration or development access under the 1872 mining law are allowed but are subject to 43 CFR 3802 and 3809.

"Open" designations are used for intensive ORV use areas where there are no special restrictions or areas where no compelling resource protection needs, user conflicts, or public safety issues exist that warrant limiting cross-country travel.

The "limited" designation is used where vehicular use must be restricted to meet specific resource management objectives. Examples of limitations include: number or types of vehicles, time or season of use, permitted or licensed use only, use limited to existing roads and trails, use limited to designated roads and trails, or other limitations necessary to meet resource management objectives (including certain competitive or intensive use areas which have special limitations).

Areas or trails are designated "closed" if it is necessary to protect resources, promote visitor safety, or reduce user conflicts. Motorized access will be allowed in closed areas by administrative personnel and permittees who have specifically requested an entrance permit consistent with other privileges.

Brochures (with maps) and other public information and educational tools (such as news releases, articles, talks to groups, environmental and resource education, etc.) inform users of opportunities and restrictions; on-site placement of signs is used to supplement these tools. Signs should be restricted to marking specific problem areas and major entry points.

DESIGNATION METHODOLOGY

Needs and concerns for resource protection, promoting public safety, and reducing conflicts associated with motorized vehicle use on public land are identified by BLM personnel and through public involvement efforts. RMP criteria guide policy and manual direction fulfillment. The BLM assembles the appropriate data to justify ORV designations and completes new inventories when existing information is insufficient to resolve problems. The ORV designations are allocated in the formulation of RMP alternatives and decided in the selection of the preferred alternative. After approval of the selected RMP, a designation order is published in the Federal Register and entered in the District Designation Order Register. Implementation plans are then developed to define and document a specific course of action necessary to carry out the ORV allocation decision. Implementation plan recommendations are either implemented or included in activity plans for further planning considerations.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN GUIDELINES

The implementation plan is an internal BLM document providing guidance to District and Resource Area managers on how to implement RMP decisions. If defines and documents a specific course of action necessary to achieve ORV designation decision.

By definition, the implementation plan is brief and more concise than an activity plan. It identifies only those actions that are essential to implement the ORV designation decisions. If activity plans are developed, the information from implementation plans are incorporated into them. However, the ORV implementation plan remains a separate entity to provide continuity for management programming, budgeting, program support and to respond to public requests. A copy is maintained at the District and Resource Area offices.

The plan should contain the following information:

- a map and narrative clearly showing the area's designation(s), the reasons for the designation (s), and any additional information needed to ensure public knowledge and understanding of the reasons for the designation. Design, scale, and format of maps are dependent on the detail needed to ensure adequate interpretation.
- the brochures and maps needed to notify the public of the ORV designations.
- the number, type, and location of physical constraints, such as barriers, fences, gates, ditches, etc.
- public notices needed to inform the public about details of designations (such as announcements on radio or television, newsletters, letters to key interest groups, and public meetings).
- an installation schedule for signs and physical constraints.
- methods and schedules for supervising motorized field procedures and arrangements needed to enforce compliance with ORV designation decisions including cooperative agreements, user group assistance, trespass notices, citations, arrests, or other actions.
- maintenance standards for signs and physical constraints.
- estimates of all costs, work months, and personnel needed to meet implementation requirements.

EMERGENCY LIMITATIONS OR CLOSURES

Limitations of use or closure of areas and trails on public lands to motorized vehicle use under the authority of 43 CFR 84341.2 are not ORV designations.

Whenever the authorized officer determines that motorized vehicle use will cause or is causing considerable adverse effects on resources (soil, vegetation, wildlife habitat, cultural, historic, scenic, recreation, or other resources), the area must be immediately closed to the type of use causing the adverse effects (see 43 CFR 8341.2). Emergency limitations or closures are not used if there is sufficient time to complete standard or interim designations. They must remain in force only until one of those designations can be made or until the adverse effects are eliminated and measures to prevent their recurrence have been implemented (whichever occurs first). The steps in emergency closure are listed in Table F-1.

A record of the problem identification, analysis, closure order, and action taken to inform the public is maintained in the District office and is available for public review. The closure limitation is entered in the District Designation Order Register.

TABLE F-1
STEPS IN THE EMERGENCY CLOSURE PROCESS

STEP	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Problem Identification	Identify and briefly document the problem that is causing considerable adverse effect.	As assigned
Analysis	Briefly document the adverse effects.	As assigned
Decision	Complete and publish the emergency order in the Federal Register.	District Manager
Implementation	Post the affected areas and notify the affected persons at the earliest date possible, using the most effective means available.	As assigned

Source: 43 Code of Federal Regulations 8342.3 and BLM Policy 1990.

Note: The above actions could be completed in a very short timeframe, a matter of hours, if necessary.

APPENDIX G
VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

DETERMINATION OF VRM CLASS RATINGS

Visual resource classes are categories assigned to public land which serve two purposes: (1) an inventory tool that portrays the relative value of the visual resources and (2) a management tool that portrays management objectives.

Ratings from scenic quality classes, visual sensitivity levels, and distance zones are combined to form visual resource management (VRM) classes. A VRM class identifies the suggested degrees of human modification that should be allowed in a certain landscape from a visual resource standpoint.

Scenic quality classes are rated for landform, water, color, vegetation, intrusions, and uniqueness. These elements are combined, and the area is classified as Class A - unique, outstanding features; Class B - outstanding features common to the physiographic region; or Class C - features common to the physiographic region.

Sensitivity levels are determined on the basis of frequency of travel through an area, use of the area, and public knowledge of the area. These elements are rated and the area is assigned a high, medium, or low sensitivity level.

Distance zones are placed in three categories: foreground/middle ground zone, background zone, and seldom seen zone. The foreground/middle ground zone is closest to the view and requires more attention and consideration in management decisions because of the great detail that can be seen in the landscape. The background and seldom seen zones are viewed in less detail by the observer and most impacts blend with the landscape because of the distance.

CRITERIA FOR VRM CLASSES

After class ratings are completed scenic quality, visual sensitivity, and distance zones areas are assigned to one of four management classes. These classes are designed to maintain visual quality and describe the different degrees of modification to the basic elements of the landscape allowed.

CLASS I: Those areas where a management decision has been made previously to maintain a natural landscape (e.g., wilderness areas, wild sections of National Wild and Scenic Rivers, and other congressionally or administratively designated areas.

CLASS II: Landscapes with Class A scenic quality, or Class B scenic quality in the foreground/middle ground zone with high visual sensitivity. Changes in any of the basic elements (form, line, color, texture) caused by a management activity should not be evident in the characteristic landscape.

CLASS III: Landscapes with Class B scenic quality and high visual sensitivity in the background zone, or with Class B scenic quality and medium visual sensitivity in the foreground/middle ground zone or with Class C scenery of high visual sensitivity in the foreground/middle ground zone. Changes in basic elements (form, line, color, texture) caused by management activity may be evident in the characteristic landscape; however, the changes should remain subordinate to the visual strength of the existing character.

CLASS IV: Landscapes with Class B scenic quality and high visual sensitivity in the seldom seen visual zone, or with Class B scenic quality and medium or low visual sensitivity in the background or seldom seen zones, or with Class C scenery quality (except with high sensitivity in the foreground/middle ground zone). Changes may subordinate the original composition and character but must reflect what could be a natural occurrence within the characteristic landscape.

MANAGEMENT AND CONTRAST RATING OBJECTIVES FOR VRM CLASSES

For activities proposed on public land, impacts are evaluated with the visual resource contrast rating system, a method of evaluating the visual contrast of a proposed activity with the existing landscape character.

The amount of contrast is measured by separating the landscape into major features (land and water surface, vegetation, and structures) and then predicting the magnitude of change in contrast of each of the basic elements (form, line, color, and texture) to each of the features. Assessing the amount of contrast for a proposed activity in this manner will indicate the severity of impact and serve as a guide in determining what is required to reduce the contrast so it will meet the visual management class requirements for the area.

Objectives for the VRM classes are listed below:

CLASS I: The objective of this class is to preserve the existing character of the landscape. This class provides for natural ecological changes; however, it does not preclude very limited management activity. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention.

CLASS II: The objective of this class is to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

CLASS III: The objective of this class is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate. Management activities may attract attention but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. Changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

CLASS IV: The objective of this class is to provide for management activities which require major modification of the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high. These management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of viewer attention. However, every attempt should be made to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance, and repeating the basic elements.

APPENDIX H-1
AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN (ACECs)

INTRODUCTION

This appendix contains general descriptions of the Areas of Critical **ENVIRONMENTAL** Concern (ACECs) identified in this Resource Management Plan (RMP). This appendix also contains descriptions of **EIGHT** areas that were considered for proposal as ACECs but were dropped from **DETAILED STUDY**.

ACECs are defined in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) as ". . . areas within the public land where special management attention is required (when such areas are developed or used or where no development is required) to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources or other natural system or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards." The regulations require that potential ACECs must meet both of the following criteria:

RELEVANCE

An area meets the "relevance" criteria if it contains one or more of the following:

1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archaeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).

2. A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive or threatened species, or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).

3. A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities which are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).

4. Natural hazards (including but not limited to areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs). A hazard caused by human action may meet the relevance criteria if it is determined through the resource management planning process that it has become part of a natural process.

IMPORTANCE

The value, resource, system, process, or hazard described above must have substantial significance and values in order to satisfy the "importance" criteria. This generally means that the value, resource, system, process, or hazard is characterized by one or more of the following:

1. Has more than locally significant qualities which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.

2. Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.

3. Has been recognized as warranting protection in order to satisfy National priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.

4. Has qualities which warrant highlighting in order to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare.

5. Poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property.

The proposed **BIOLOGICAL** ACECs were identified with the assistance of a report prepared by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in January 1990 titled "Potential Biological Special Management Areas in the Mimbres Resource Area." This report was prepared by The Nature Conservancy New Mexico Field Office for the BLM under the BLM's Challenge Cost-Share Program. The report evaluated and identified potential biological ACECs based upon the relevance and importance criteria outlined above. Biological ACECs include riparian, special status animal or plant species, or plant communities.

PROPOSED CULTURAL ACECS WERE IDENTIFIED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE "1990 ROPES REVIEW: IDENTIFICATION OF RESEARCH AND FUNDING PRIORITIES IN THE MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA." THIS REPORT WAS PREPARED UNDER THE CHALLENGE COST-SHARE PROGRAM WITH NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY.

The narratives in this Appendix for each ACEC include a general description, the management goals, the management prescriptions (planned actions) **AND INDIVIDUAL LAND STATUS LOCATION MAPS**. The descriptive narratives of the ACECs vary due to the management attention each area **NEEDS TO RECEIVE**. An attempt has been made to develop management prescriptions that are as detailed as possible to avoid the time and expense of preparing activity plans for each ACEC subsequent to the RMP. In some cases, the need has been identified to develop site-specific grazing plans or other activity plans for individual ACECs. It should also be noted that regulations require a Plan of Operation for all mining activities that take place within an ACEC, if that ACEC is open to mining. Therefore, this requirement is not listed separately in the management prescriptions for each ACEC.

The proposed ACECs in this RMP are listed in alphabetical order below. Please see Map 2-26 for the general locations of all ACECs in the Mimbres Resource Area.

LIST OF AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN UNDER THE PROPOSED PLAN

Alamo Hueco Mountains ACEC
Apache Box ACEC
Bear Creek ACEC
Big Hatchet Mountains ACEC
Central Peloncillo Mountains ACEC
Cooke's Range ACEC
Cowboy Spring ACEC
Dona Ana Mountains ACEC
Florida Mountains ACEC
Gila Lower Box ACEC
Gila Middle Box ACEC
Granite Gap ACEC
Guadalupe Canyon ACEC
Los Tules ACEC
Northern Peloncillo Mountains ACEC
Old Town ACEC
Organ/Franklin Mountains ACEC
Rincon ACEC
Robledo Mountains ACEC
San Diego Mountain ACEC
Uvas Valley ACEC

AREAS CONSIDERED BUT NOT PROPOSED AS ACECs

SAN SIMON CIENEGA - The Arizona portion of this area was not proposed as an ACEC in the Safford RMP. The Mimbres RMP team concluded that the biological values of the New Mexico portion alone did not meet the relevance and importance criteria. The entire area, including the Arizona portion is managed under a Habitat Management Plan (HMP).

GARDNER DAM - This small area on the West Mesa, southwest of Las Cruces, was nominated as an ACEC in comments received by the public during the scoping period. The RMP team concluded that this area did not meet any of the relevance and importance criteria because there are no significant resource qualities.

EAST POTRILLO MOUNTAINS - This area located southwest of Las Cruces was marginally recommended by TNC as an ACEC. After further review, the RMP team concluded that the area does not meet any of the relevance and importance criteria because there are no significant resource qualities.

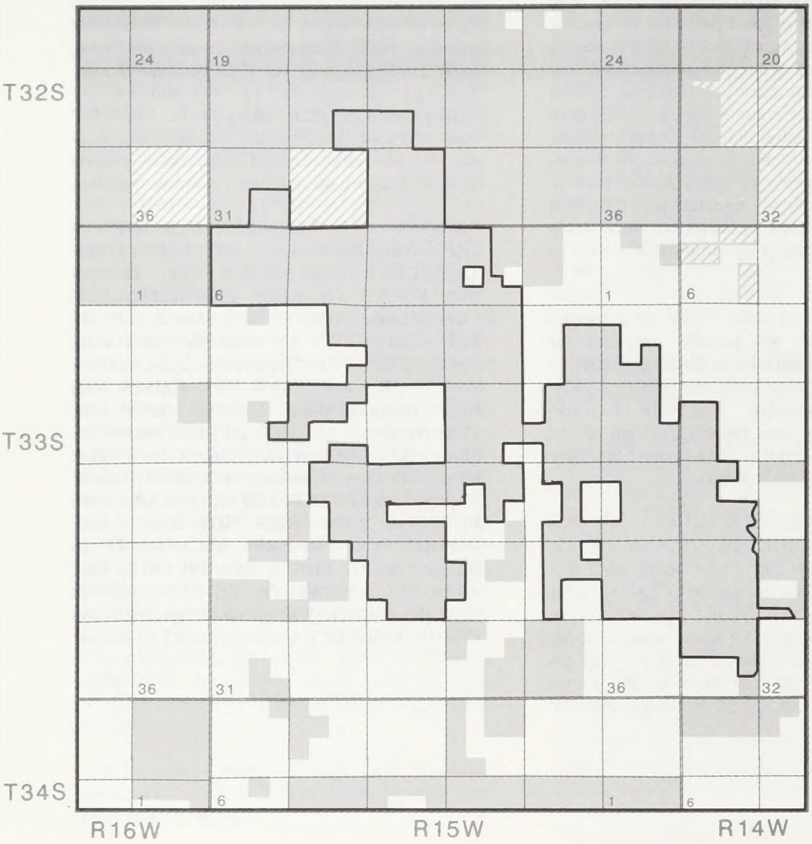
WEST POTRILLO MOUNTAINS - This large area is located west of Las Cruces and is currently a Wilderness Study Area (WSA). After review by TNC and the RMP team, it was concluded that this area does not meet the relevance criteria because it does not contain significant resource qualities (historic, cultural, scenic, fish and wildlife or other natural systems or processes). It can, however, be protected by other means such as restricting rights-of-way, minerals activities, and vehicle uses (as outlined in sections on other issues and management concerns) without designation as an ACEC.

PYRAMID MOUNTAINS - This area located south of Lordsburg was initially considered for evaluation by TNC but after extensive consultation did not appear to have sufficient biological value for further consideration. The RMP team also concluded that the area did not meet any of the relevance or importance criteria because there are no significant resource qualities.

APACHE HILLS/SIERRA RICA - This area located southwest of Deming (between the Big Hatchet Mountains and Cedar Mountains) was initially considered for evaluation by TNC but after extensive consultation did not appear to have sufficient biological value for further consideration. The RMP team also concluded that the area did not meet any of the relevance or importance criteria because there are no significant resource qualities.

BURRO MOUNTAINS - This area located on the lower western slopes of the Burro Mountains contains mostly scattered parcels of public land, some contiguous with the Gila National Forest. The area was evaluated by TNC and was not recommended for ACEC designation. The RMP team also concluded that the area does not meet any of the relevance and importance criteria because there are no significant resource qualities.

KNEELING NUN - THIS AREA IS LOCATED IN THE NORTHERN END OF THE COBRE MOUNTAINS NEAR SILVER CITY. IT WAS NOT FOUND TO MEET THE RELEVANCE CRITERIA BECAUSE OF THE SMALL SIZE OF THE FEATURE IN AN ALREADY VISUALLY DISTURBED AREA. THE LANDSCAPE WITHIN WHICH THE KNEELING NUN EXISTS HAS BEEN DRASTICALLY ALTERED FROM THE TYRONE MINE AND THE HURLEY SMELTER SLAG PILES. THIS ALTERATION LEAVES THE FEATURE AS A SUBORDINATE FEATURE OF AN EXTREMELY ALTERED LANDSCAPE. THE KNEELING NUN DOES NOT MEET THE IMPORTANCE CRITERIA BECAUSE IT IS PRIMARILY OF LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE. THE AREA WILL, HOWEVER, BE RETAINED IN PUBLIC OWNERSHIP AND MANAGED AS VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CLASS II.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ALAMO HUECO MOUNTAINS

ACEC–PROPOSED PLAN

SCALE 1: 75000

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3.1 0 3.1 KILOMETER

Legend

ACEC BOUNDARY	—
PUBLIC LAND	■
STATE LAND	▨
OTHER LANDS	☐

ALAMO HUECO MOUNTAINS ACEC

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The proposed Alamo Hueco Mountains ACEC is located in southeast Hidalgo County approximately 80 miles southeast of Lordsburg, New Mexico. The size of the proposed ACEC **IS 13,020 ACRES** (see planned actions below). The Alamo Huecos are volcanic mountains featuring open grasslands or shrub/grasslands on the foothills and lower slopes leading to shrub/grass communities higher up, with distinct riparian communities in the more pronounced drainages. The area features diverse plant and animal communities, cultural and paleontological resources, and scenic qualities.

The proposed Alamo Hueco Mountains ACEC meets the BLM's ACEC relevance criteria because the site contains numerous State-listed and Federal candidate plant and animal species, desert bighorn sheep habitat, cultural and paleontological values, and scenic values. The area meets the BLM's ACEC importance criteria because its values are **OF MORE THAN LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE,** vulnerable to adverse change and require special management and protection.

THE SIZE OF THE ACEC UNDER THE PROPOSED PLAN WAS REVISED FROM THE DRAFT RMP/EIS TO DELETE AREAS NOT CRITICAL TO MANAGEMENT OF THE ACEC (PRIMARILY AT THE BASE OF THE MOUNTAINS).

MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage to protect biological (especially bighorn sheep and riparian), scenic, cultural, and paleontological values.

PLANNED ACTIONS

PROPOSED PLAN - 13,020 ACRES

- Retain all public land; acquire all State trust and private land **INHOLDINGS THROUGH EXCHANGE OR PURCHASE AT FAIR MARKET VALUE, PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION.**
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails.
- Exclude authorizations for **NEW ROWs IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN).**
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Acquire legal public access to boundary, with parking areas (½ acre) and trailheads.
- Set carrying capacity for **ALL LANDS WITHIN** the Section 15 portion of the grazing allotment and initiate grazing activity plan.
- Consider chemical brush control in some portions where necessary to meet desired plant community objectives.
- Manage as Class II for air quality.
- Exclude heavy equipment for fire suppression.
- Carry forward all provisions of existing HMP.
- Conduct/encourage archaeological and paleontological surveys.
- Manage as VRM Class I.
- **UPON ACQUISITION OF PRIVATE LAND, CONSULT AND COORDINATE WITH THE GRAZING PERMITTEE TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT PROJECTS FOR THE PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF SPRINGS AND RIPARIAN AREAS. PROJECTS MAY CONSIST OF SMALL EXCLOSURES (10 ACRES OR LESS), SPRING DEVELOPMENTS, PASTURE FENCING, CONSTRUCTION OF LIVESTOCK WATER SOURCES AWAY FROM RIPARIAN AREAS, RELOCATION OF EXISTING WATER TROUGHS AWAY FROM RIPARIAN AREAS, AND REVEGETATION OF RIPARIAN AREAS. UP TO A TOTAL OF 10 MILES OF FENCE COULD BE CONSTRUCTED.**
- Manage for ROS primitive and semi-primitive nonmotorized classes.

APACHE BOX ACEC

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The proposed Apache Box ACEC is located in **NORTHWEST** Grant County approximately 18 miles south of Mule Creek. The size of the proposed ACEC is **2,630** acres. Apache Box is a sheet-walled narrow canyon with cliffs over 500 feet high and a nearly pristine riparian area found in the bottom of the box. Also within the proposed ACEC are found several Federal, State-listed, and Federal candidate plant and animal species, numerous cultural resources, a globally rare plant community, and high scenic values.

The Apache Box meets the BLM's ACEC relevance criteria because of the Federal and State-listed species, rare plant communities, and cultural and scenic values. The area meets the importance criteria because it has qualities that make it unique, threatened and vulnerable to adverse change warranting special management protection.

MANAGEMENT GOALS

MANAGE TO PROTECT BIOLOGICAL, SCENIC, CULTURAL, SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES, AND RIPARIAN VALUES.

PLANNED ACTIONS

PROPOSED PLAN - 2,630 ACRES

- Retain all public land; acquire all adjacent State trust and private land **INHOLDINGS THROUGH EXCHANGE OR PURCHASE AT FAIR MARKET VALUE, PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION.**
- Close to vehicle use (except for administrative use).
- Exclude authorizations for **NEW** ROWs **IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN).**
- Withdraw from locatable mineral entry.
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid **AND NON-ENERGY** mineral leasing.
- Conduct validity exam on existing mining operations.
- Acquire legal public access.
- **DEVELOP LIVESTOCK GRAZING PLAN TO PROTECT OR ENHANCE RIPARIAN VALUES.**
- Exclude heavy equipment for fire suppression.
- Allow natural fires to burn within prescribed conditions in upland areas.
- **CONSIDER SELECTED MECHANICAL THINNING OF ALLIGATOR JUNIPER TO MAINTAIN NATURAL GRASSLAND AREAS.**
- Conduct Class III archaeological survey.
- Install protective grates in three rock shelters to exclude pothunters.
- Safety/"no shooting" restriction February 1-August 15.
- Manage as VRM Class I.
- Manage for ROS primitive and semi-primitive nonmotorized classes.

BEAR CREEK ACEC

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The proposed Bear Creek ACEC is located in central Grant County approximately 15 miles northwest of Silver City, New Mexico. The size of the area is 1,480 acres. Bear Creek is a riparian area about a mile and a half long. The uplands above the riparian area are comprised of a pinyon/juniper woodland which give way to the riparian area which includes small cliffs and box canyon. The riparian area contains a perennial stream with an Arizona sycamore/Fremont cottonwood plant community.

Bear Creek meets the BLM's ACEC relevance criteria because of the scarcity of Arizona sycamore/Fremont cottonwood riparian plant community. **FEW EXAMPLES OF THIS SYSTEM REMAIN IN NEW MEXICO**. The area meets the importance criteria because it has qualities which warrant highlighting in order to satisfy public or management concerns.

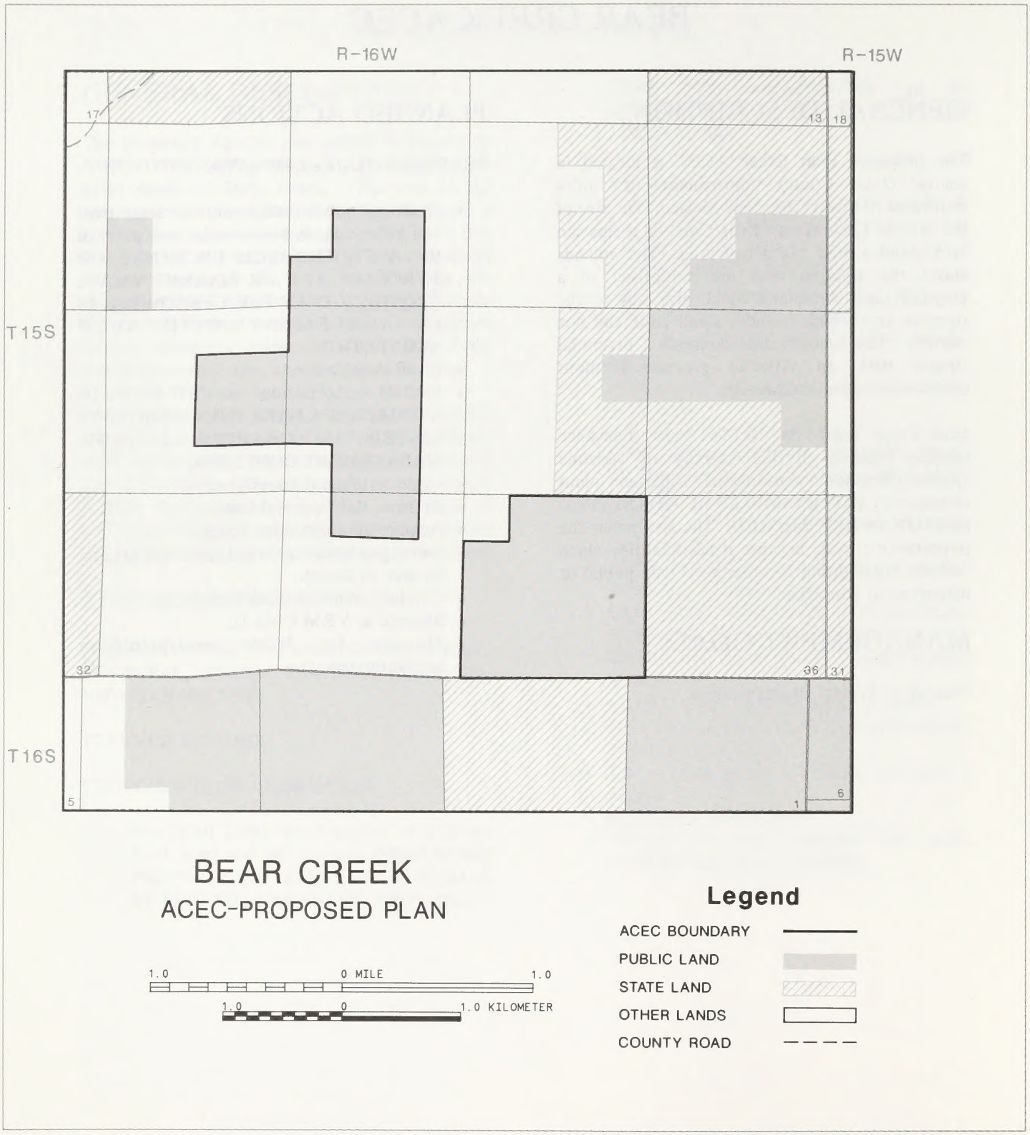
MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage to protect riparian values.

PLANNED ACTIONS

PROPOSED PLAN - 1,480 ACRES

- Retain all public land; acquire all State trust and private lands between the two parts of the ACEC **THROUGH EXCHANGE OR PURCHASE AT FAIR MARKET VALUE, PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION.**
- Close to vehicle use.
- Exclude authorizations for **NEW ROWs IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN).**
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Acquire administrative access.
- Install gap fences to exclude livestock grazing (½ mile of fence).
- Conduct archaeological survey.
- Manage as VRM Class II.
- Manage for ROS semi-primitive nonmotorized class.



BEAR CREEK
ACEC-PROPOSED PLAN

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R-15W
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1.0 KILOMETER
Legend
ACEC BOUNDARY
PUBLIC LAND
STATE LAND
OTHER LANDS
COUNTY ROAD

BIG HATCHET MOUNTAINS ACEC

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The proposed Big Hatchet Mountains ACEC is located in southeast Hidalgo County approximately 15 miles south of Hatchita, New Mexico. The size of the proposed ACEC **IS 29,180 ACRES** (see planned actions below). The Big Hatchets are comprised of limestone and reach an elevation of 8,860 feet at Big Hatchet Peak. The mountain range runs northwest to southeast with diverse vegetation types at different elevations and aspects. There are several Federal and State-listed plants and animals found in the mountain range.

The Big Hatchet Mountains meet the BLM's relevance criteria because of the several Federal and State-listed plants and animals, desert bighorn sheep habitat, and diverse vegetation types found throughout the area. The area meets the importance criteria because it has qualities **OF MORE THAN LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE** that make it rare, unique and vulnerable to adverse change and require special management and protection.

THE SIZE OF THE ACEC UNDER THE PROPOSED PLAN WAS REVISED FROM THE DRAFT RMP/EIS TO DELETE AREAS NOT CRITICAL TO MANAGEMENT OF THE ACEC FROM THE BASE OF THE MOUNTAINS.

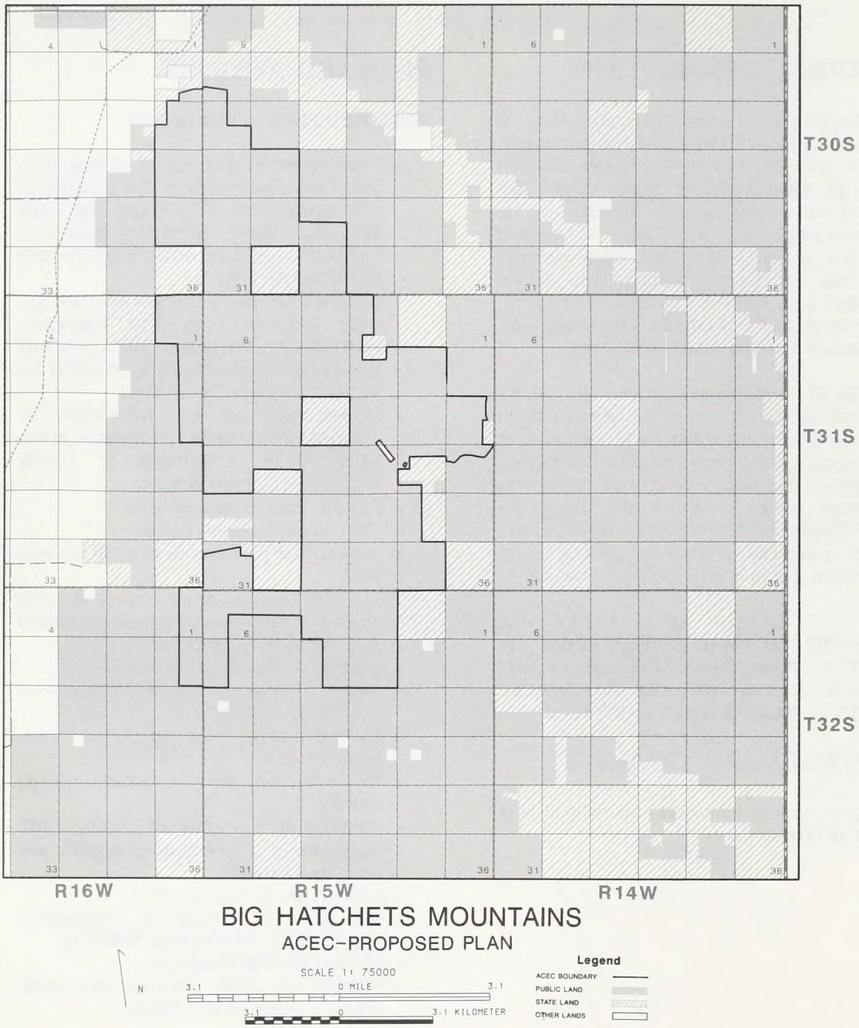
MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage to protect biological (especially bighorn sheep) and scenic values.

PLANNED ACTIONS

PROPOSED PLAN - 29,180 ACRES

- Retain all public land; acquire all State trust and private land **INHOLDINGS THROUGH EXCHANGE OR PURCHASE AT FAIR MARKET VALUE, PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION.**
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails **EXCEPT FOR THE CENTRAL PORTION OF THE AREA (AROUND BIG HATCHET PEAK) WHICH IS CLOSED TO VEHICLE USE (4,160 ACRES).**
- Exclude authorizations for **NEW ROWs IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN).**
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Acquire legal public access to north and west sides.
- Consider chemical brush control in some portions where necessary to meet desired plant community objectives.
- Manage as Class II for air quality.
- Allow natural fires to burn within prescribed conditions.
- Exclude heavy equipment for fire suppression.
- Revise present AMP to address wildlife concerns.
- Continue all provisions of existing HMP (maintenance of water developments and prescribed burning).
- Conduct archaeological survey.
- Manage for primitive recreation opportunities (no developed facilities).
- Manage as VRM Class I.
- Manage for ROS primitive and semi-primitive nonmotorized classes.



BIG HATCHETS MOUNTAINS

ACEC-PROPOSED PLAN

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SCALE 1: 75000
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3.1 KILOMETER
Legend
ACEC BOUNDARY
PUBLIC LAND
STATE LAND
OTHER LANDS

CENTRAL PELONCILLO MOUNTAINS ACEC

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The proposed Central Peloncillo Mountain ACEC is located in southwest Hidalgo County approximately 25 miles southwest of Animas, New Mexico. The size of the area is 12,750 acres. This area consists of the most rugged and remote portion of the Peloncillo Mountains. The area is dominated by a major ridge which runs north/south with peaks, smaller hills and ridges, all separated by canyons of various sizes. The location and orientation of these mountains provide a natural passage for unique wildlife from Mexico into the U.S.

The Central Peloncillo Mountains meet the BLM's relevance criteria because they provide habitat for several State-listed plants and animals, support one of the most extensive and well-developed examples of Madrean evergreen woodland in New Mexico, provide opportunities for scientific research of vegetation and wildlife, and have outstanding scenic values. The area meets the importance criteria because it has qualities that are **OF MORE THAN LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE,** unique, exemplary, and vulnerable to adverse change warranting special management and protection.

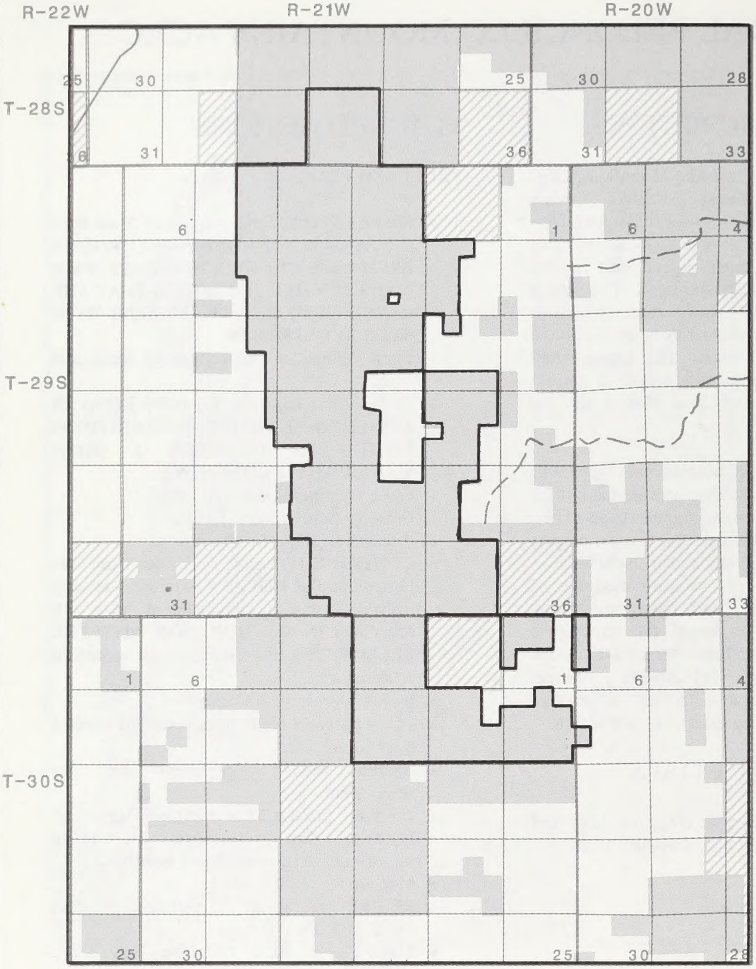
MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage to protect biological (bighorn sheep and habitat diversity), research, and scenic values.

PLANNED ACTIONS

PROPOSED PLAN - 12,750 acres

- Retain all public land; acquire all State trust and private land **INHOLDINGS THROUGH EXCHANGE OR PURCHASE AT FAIR MARKET VALUE, PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION.**
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails.
- Exclude authorizations for **NEW** ROWs **IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN).**
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Acquire legal public access.
- **CONTINUE TO** exclude livestock from Owl Canyon and **SCHOLES** Allotments, develop livestock grazing management plan for remainder **IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE PERMITTEES**, and change all allotments to "I" category.
- Develop prescribed burn plan.
- Allow natural fires to burn within prescribed conditions.
- Exclude heavy equipment for fire suppression.
- Continue provisions of existing HMP.
- Manage for primitive recreation opportunities (no developed facilities).
- Manage as VRM Class I.
- **REVISE** existing ACEC management plan for **SCHOLES** Allotment.
- Manage for ROS primitive and semi-primitive nonmotorized classes.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CENTRAL PELONCILLO MOUNTAINS

ACEC-PROPOSED PLAN

SCALE 1: 75000

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3.1 0 3.1 KILOMETER

Legend

ACEC BOUNDARY	—
PUBLIC LAND	■
STATE LAND	▨
OTHER LANDS	☐

COOKE'S RANGE ACEC

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The proposed Cooke's Range ACEC is located in north central Luna County approximately 15 miles northeast of Deming, New Mexico. **THE SIZE OF THE PROPOSED ACEC IS 17,160 ACRES, INCLUDING FORT CUMMINGS, AND THE PONY HILLS AND MASSACRE PEAK PETROGLYPH SITES.** The Cooke's Range is dominated by Cooke's Peak which rises to 8,408 feet. The range spreads out from the peak to the north and south and consists of lower peaks and numerous steep ridges.

FORT CUMMINGS IS LOCATED ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE COOKE'S RANGE AND WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1863 TO PROTECT TRAVELLERS ON THE EMIGRANT TRAIL FROM APACHE DEPREDATIONS. IT WAS OCCUPIED INTERMITTENTLY FROM 1863 TO THE 1890'S. THE ORIGINAL POST WAS RECTANGULAR IN SHAPE AND SURROUNDED BY A 10 FOOT HIGH ADOBE WALL. FORT CUMMINGS COULD WELL BE THE PRIMARY NEW MEXICO APACHE WARS MILITARY INSTALLATION DURING THE LATE 1860's AND AGAIN IN THE EARLY 1880's. THE FORT IS CONSIDERED TO HAVE LOCAL AND REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE. A CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN WAS RECENTLY PREPARED AND APPROVED FOR THE FORT. ALTHOUGH MUCH OF THE FORT IS ON PRIVATELY-OWNED LAND, OTHER STRUCTURES ASSOCIATED WITH THE ARMY POST ARE ON PUBLIC LAND MANAGED BY BLM. APPROXIMATELY 40 ACRES ARE PRIVATELY-OWNED.

THE MASSACRE PEAK AND PONY HILLS PETROGLYPH SITES ARE LOCATED WEST OF FORT CUMMINGS ON THE SOUTH END OF THE COOKE'S RANGE. BOTH ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MIMBRES CULTURE AND CONSIST OF NUMEROUS PETROGLYPHS PECKED ONTO SANDSTONE OUTCROPS. THE PETROGLYPHS INCLUDE ZOOMORPHIC, ANTHROPOMORPHIC, AND GEOMETRIC (HUMPBACKED FLUTE PLAYER) FIGURE. THESE SITES ARE SUBJECT TO VANDALISM AND REMOVAL OF PANELS WITH CHISELS. BOTH SITES HAVE HIGH EDUCATIONAL AND INTERPRETIVE POTENTIAL.

Cooke's Range meets the BLM's relevance criteria because it provides habitat for several State-listed and State-sensitive plants. The area is also rich in cultural resources, has the only population of Arizona cypress in New Mexico, and has excellent scenic values. The area meets the importance criteria because it has qualities that are **OF MORE THAN LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE,** rare, sensitive, and vulnerable to adverse change warranting special management and protection.

THE SIZE OF THE ACEC UNDER THE PROPOSED PLAN WAS REVISED FROM THE DRAFT RMP/EIS TO DELETE AREAS NOT CRITICAL TO MANAGEMENT OF THE ACEC FROM THE BASE OF THE RANGE.

MANAGEMENT GOALS

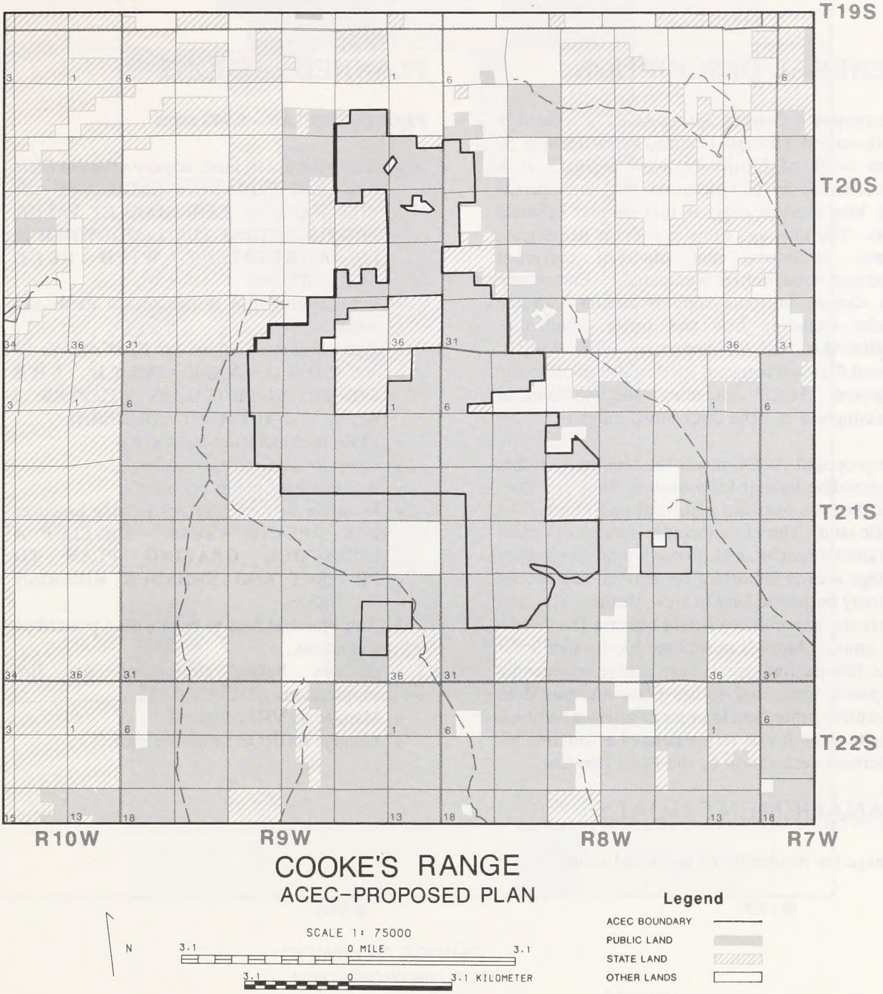
Manage to protect biological, scenic, and cultural values.

PLANNED ACTIONS

PROPOSED PLAN - 17,160 ACRES

- Retain all public land; acquire all State trust and private land **INHOLDINGS THROUGH EXCHANGE OR PURCHASE AT FAIR MARKET VALUE, PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION.**
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails.
- Exclude authorizations for **NEW ROWs IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN).**
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Acquire legal public access.

- Develop livestock grazing activity plan.
- Consider chemical brush control in some portions where necessary to meet desired plant community objectives.
- Develop prescribed burn plans.
- Exclude heavy equipment for fire suppression.
- Allow natural fires to burn within prescribed conditions.
- Incorporate provisions of existing Cultural Resource Management Plan for Fort Cummings.
- Conduct archaeological surveys.
- Develop stabilization plans for historic mining towns.
- Interpret the petroglyphs through signs and tours.
- Manage for primitive recreation opportunities.
- Manage as VRM Class I.
- **CONSULT AND COORDINATE WITH THE LIVESTOCK PERMITTEE TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT PROJECTS FOR THE PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF SPRINGS AND RIPARIAN AREAS. PROJECTS MAY CONSIST OF SMALL EXCLOSURES (10 ACRES OR LESS), SPRING DEVELOPMENTS, CONSTRUCTION OF LIVESTOCK WATER SOURCES AWAY FROM RIPARIAN AREAS, RELOCATION OF EXISTING WATER TROUGHS AWAY FROM RIPARIAN AREAS, AND REVEGETATION OF RIPARIAN AREAS. UP TO A TOTAL OF 1 MILE OF FENCE COULD BE CONSTRUCTED.**
- Manage for ROS primitive and semi-primitive nonmotorized classes.
- **CLOSE TO FUELWOOD SALE OR COLLECTION.**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ACEC BOUNDARY
PUBLIC LAND
STATE LAND
OTHER LANDS

COOKE'S RANGE
ACEC-PROPOSED PLAN

COWBOY SPRING ACEC

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The proposed Cowboy Spring ACEC is located in south-central Hidalgo County, approximately 50 miles south of Lordsburg, New Mexico. It is characterized by mid-elevation hills interspersed with long shallow canyons that support seasonal flows. The hills and canyons support dense grass stands, sacahuista, and Madrean evergreen woodland communities dominated by Emory oak. The canyon bottoms support riparian wildlife species including frog and turtle populations despite the lack of perennial surface water. Several State endangered species also occur in the proposed ACEC including the white-eared hummingbird and the thick-billed kingbird.

The proposed ACEC meets the relevance criteria by providing habitat for a diverse fauna and flora typical of the Mexican highlands and unusual for public land. The biota includes endangered plant and animal species, and protection of the Cowboy Springs area is important for maintaining species diversity on public land in New Mexico. The area meets the importance criteria because the diverse and unusual biota is more than locally significant since this habitat type is very poorly represented on public land, and it has been recognized as warranting protection in order to satisfy a National priority when it was recommended as suitable for wilderness designation by the BLM Director.

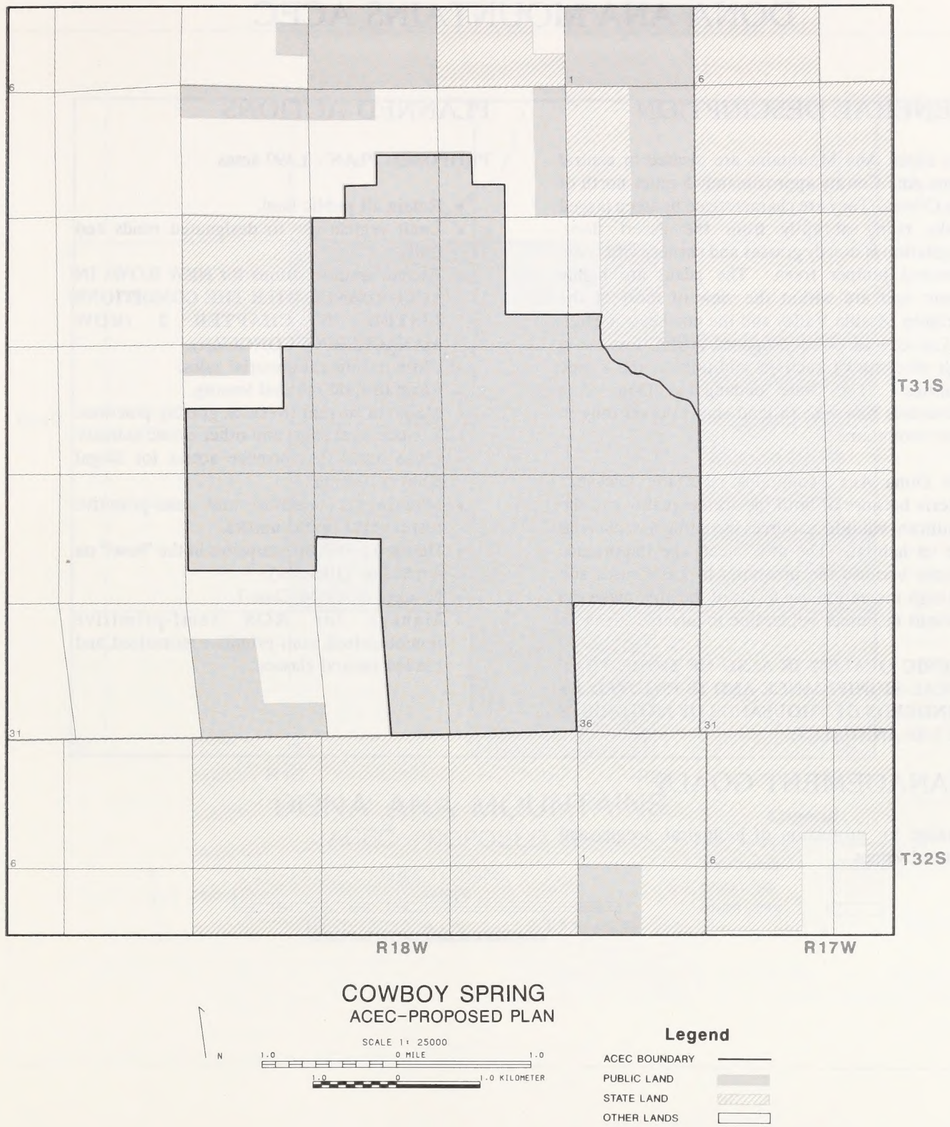
MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage for protection of biological values.

PLANNED ACTIONS

PROPOSED PLAN - 6,740 acres

- Retain all public land; acquire adjacent State trust land **THROUGH EXCHANGE OR PURCHASE AT FAIR MARKET VALUE, PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION.**
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails.
- Exclude authorizations for **NEW ROWs IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONSLISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN).**
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Acquire legal public access.
- Maintain current livestock grazing practices **FOR UPLAND AREAS. DEVELOP A LIVESTOCK GRAZING PLAN TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE RIPARIAN VALUES.**
- Allow natural fires to burn within prescribed conditions.
- Exclude heavy equipment for fire suppression.
- Manage as VRM Class II.
- Manage for ROS primitive class.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ACEC BOUNDARY
PUBLIC LAND
STATE LAND
OTHER LANDS

COWBOY SPRING
ACEC-PROPOSED PLAN

DONA ANA MOUNTAINS ACEC

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Dona Ana Mountains are located in central Dona Ana County approximately 5 miles north of Las Cruces. They are characterized by steep jagged peaks rising abruptly from the desert floor. Vegetation is mostly grasses and shrubs, with some scattered juniper trees. The peaks are highly scenic, and are within the view of most of the northern Mesilla Valley and the northeast portion of Las Cruces. The proposed ACEC features a high diversity of cacti in addition to the scenic qualities. The State endangered Dona Ana Mountains *sonorella* (a land snail) occurs only in these mountains.

The Dona Ana Mountains meet the relevance criteria because of both the scenic quality and the significant wildlife resources including the *sonorella* and its habitat. The area meets the importance criteria because the proximity to Las Cruces and the high recreation use levels of the area make the relevant resources vulnerable to adverse change.

SCENIC QUALITY IS ALSO OF MORE THAN LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE AND IS ENJOYED BY HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF MOTORISTS ON I-25 ANNUALLY.

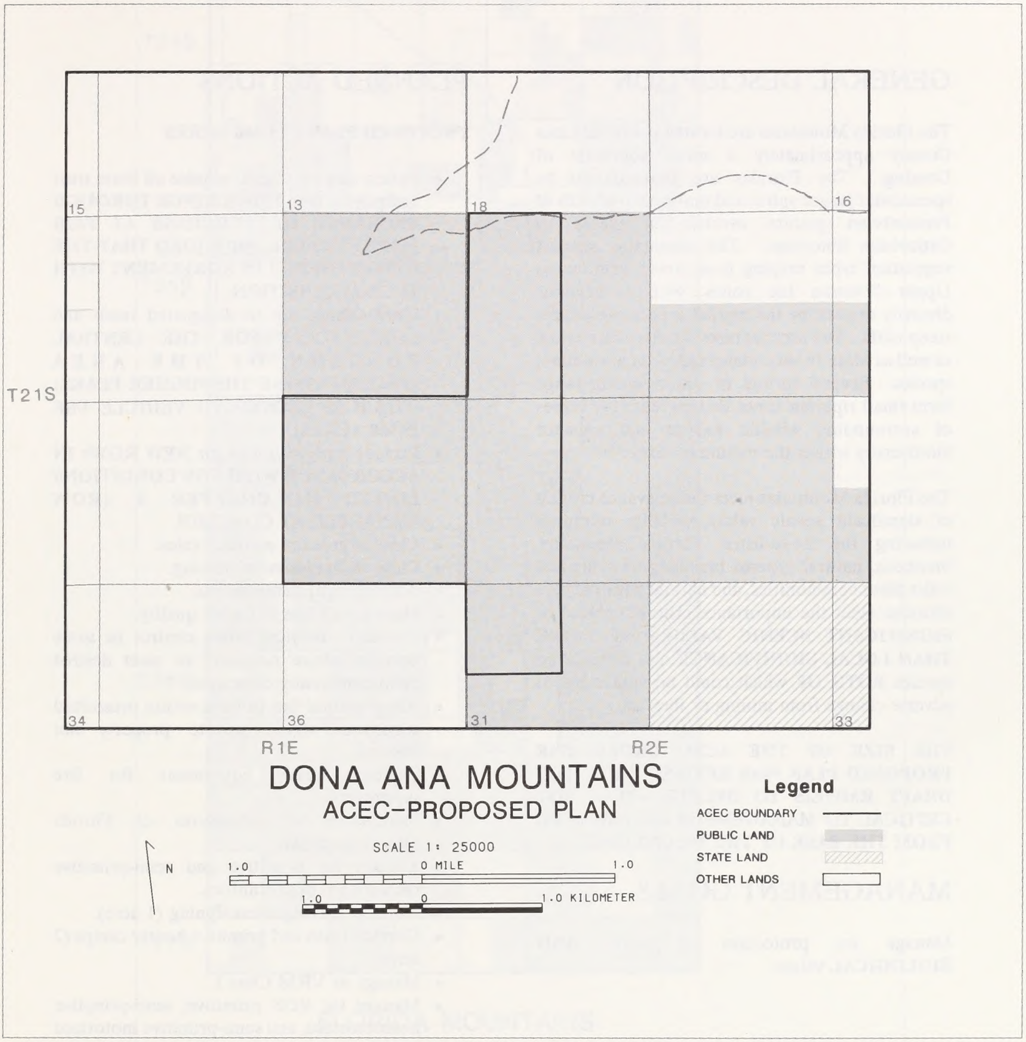
MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage for protection of biological, scenic, and cultural values.

PLANNED ACTIONS

PROPOSED PLAN - 1,490 acres

- Retain all public land.
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails.
- Exclude authorizations for **NEW ROWs IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN).**
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Maintain current livestock grazing practices.
- Exclude feral goats and other exotic animals.
- Close roads that provide access for illegal plant collecting.
- Manage for primitive and semi-primitive recreational opportunities.
- Develop primitive campsites in the "bowl" on north side (10 acres).
- Manage as VRM Class I.
- Manage for ROS semi-primitive nonmotorized, semi-primitive motorized, and roaded natural classes.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PUBLIC LAND
STATE LAND
OTHER LANDS
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DONA ANA MOUNTAINS
ACEC-PROPOSED PLAN

FLORIDA MOUNTAINS ACEC

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Florida Mountains are located in central Luna County approximately 8 miles southeast of Deming. The Floridas are characterized by spectacular jagged spires and multi-colored cliffs of Precambrian granite overlain in places by Ordovician limestone. The mountains support vegetation types ranging from lower Sonoran to Upper Sonoran life zones, with tremendous diversity created by the myriad aspects within the steep cliffs. The area features spectacular scenery as well as State-listed endangered plant and animal species. Several springs in the mountain range form small riparian zones that increase the values of surrounding wildlife habitat and enhance biodiversity within the mountain range.

The Florida Mountains meet the relevance criteria of significant scenic values, wildlife resources including the State-listed Florida Mountains oreohelix, natural systems including endemic and relict plant communities, and natural hazards. The Floridas meet the importance criteria because of **SIGNIFICANT SCENIC VALUES OF MORE THAN LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE** and endangered species **BOTH OF** which could be vulnerable to adverse change from mining or ibex use.

THE SIZE OF THE ACEC UNDER THE PROPOSED PLAN WAS REVISED FROM THE DRAFT RMP/EIS TO DELETE AREAS NOT CRITICAL TO MANAGEMENT OF THE ACEC FROM THE BASE OF THE MOUNTAINS.

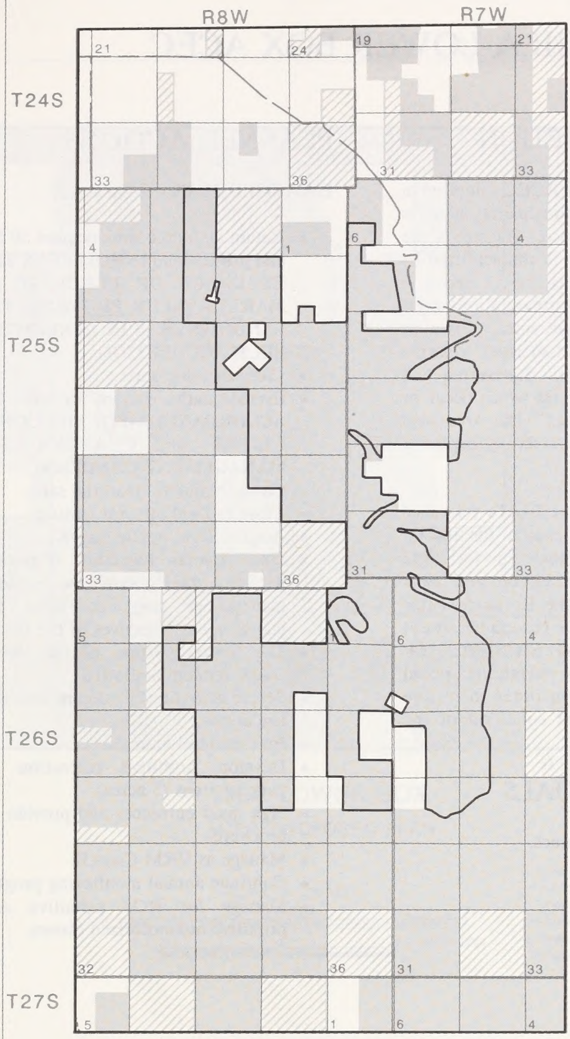
MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage for protection of scenic **AND BIOLOGICAL** values.

PLANNED ACTIONS

PROPOSED PLAN - 15,660 ACRES

- Retain all public land; acquire all State trust and private land **INHOLDINGS THROUGH EXCHANGE OR PURCHASE AT FAIR MARKET VALUE, PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION.**
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails, **EXCEPT FOR THE CENTRAL PORTION OF THE AREA (ENCOMPASSING THE HIGHER PEAKS) WHICH IS CLOSED TO VEHICLE USE (5,900 ACRES).**
- Exclude authorizations for **NEW** ROWs **IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN.**
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Acquire legal public access.
- Manage as Class II for air quality.
- Consider chemical brush control in some portions where necessary to meet desired plant community objectives.
- Allow natural fire to burn within prescribed conditions where private property not affected.
- Exclude heavy equipment for fire suppression.
- Incorporate all provisions of Florida Mountains HMP.
- Manage for primitive and semi-primitive recreational opportunities.
- Develop parking areas/signing (1 acre).
- Develop trails and primitive hunter camps (2 acres).
- Manage as VRM Class I.
- Manage for ROS primitive, semi-primitive nonmotorized, and semi-primitive motorized classes.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FLORIDA MOUNTAINS

ACEC–PROPOSED PLAN

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Legend

ACEC BOUNDARY ———

PUBLIC LAND ▆

STATE LAND ▨

OTHER LANDS ☐

STATE HIGHWAY - - - - - - -

GILA LOWER BOX ACEC

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The proposed Gila Lower Box ACEC is located in northwest Hidalgo County approximately 30 miles north of Lordsburg, New Mexico. The size of the area is 6,490 acres. The site is characterized by cliffs and steep canyon sides rising above a significant riparian area. The riparian area itself has stands of Arizona sycamore, Fremont cottonwoods, willows, and associated riparian vegetation. There are several State-listed and Federal candidate animal species which occur or have habitat within the area. The area also provides seasonal habitat for numerous species of raptors.

The Gila Lower Box meets the BLM's relevance criteria because it provides habitat for several State-listed and Federal candidate species. The Gila Lower Box is also the largest and most significant riparian area in the Resource Area. The area meets the importance criteria because it **IS OF MORE THAN LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE AND** has been recognized as warranting special management and protection in order to restore and rehabilitate the degraded condition of the riparian area.

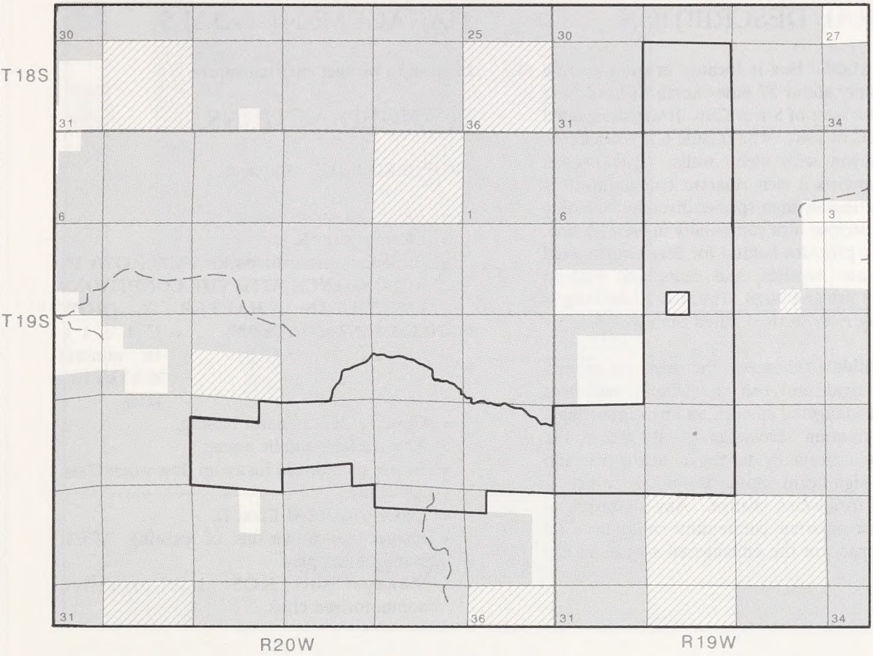
MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage to protect riparian values.

PLANNED ACTIONS

PROPOSED PLAN - 6,490 acres

- Retain all public land; acquire all State trust and private land **INHOLDINGS THROUGH EXCHANGE OR PURCHASE AT FAIR MARKET VALUE, PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION.**
- Close to vehicle use.
- Exclude authorizations for **NEW ROWs IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN).**
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Acquire legal public access.
- Once riparian vegetation is re-established, livestock grazing would be considered as a management tool to meet vegetation management objectives in the river bottom.
- The fenced portion of the river bottom would remain unallotted.
- Secure guaranteed instream flow when State law allows.
- Exclude feral animals.
- Develop primitive recreation site and parking areas (5 acres).
- Sign main entrances and provide maps and brochures.
- Manage as VRM Class II.
- Continue annual monitoring program.
- Manage for ROS primitive and semi-primitive nonmotorized classes.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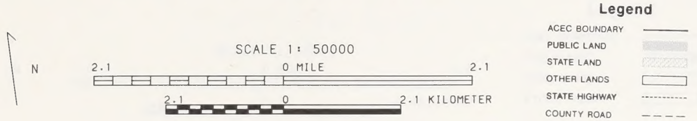
GILA LOWER BOX

ACEC–PROPOSED PLAN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SCALE 1: 50000
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ACEC BOUNDARY
PUBLIC LAND
STATE LAND
OTHER LANDS
STATE HIGHWAY
COUNTY ROAD

GILA MIDDLE BOX ACEC

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Gila Middle Box is located in southwestern Grant County about 27 miles north of Lordsburg and 20 miles west of Silver City. It was designated as an ACEC in 1984. The middle box is a narrow, rugged canyon with steep walls. The canyon bottom supports a rich riparian community that includes extremely high species diversity including the most specious bird community in New Mexico. The canyon provides habitat for State endangered mammals and reptiles, and State and Federal endangered fish and birds. The river is the longest free-flowing river in the United States.

The Gila Middle Box meets the relevance criteria by having significant fish and wildlife resources including endangered species, and by supporting a sensitive riparian ecosystem. It meets the importance criteria by having a distinctive and regionally significant biotic assemblage which is vulnerable to adverse change. Any alteration of the river or riparian community could have an adverse impact on the endangered species in the area.

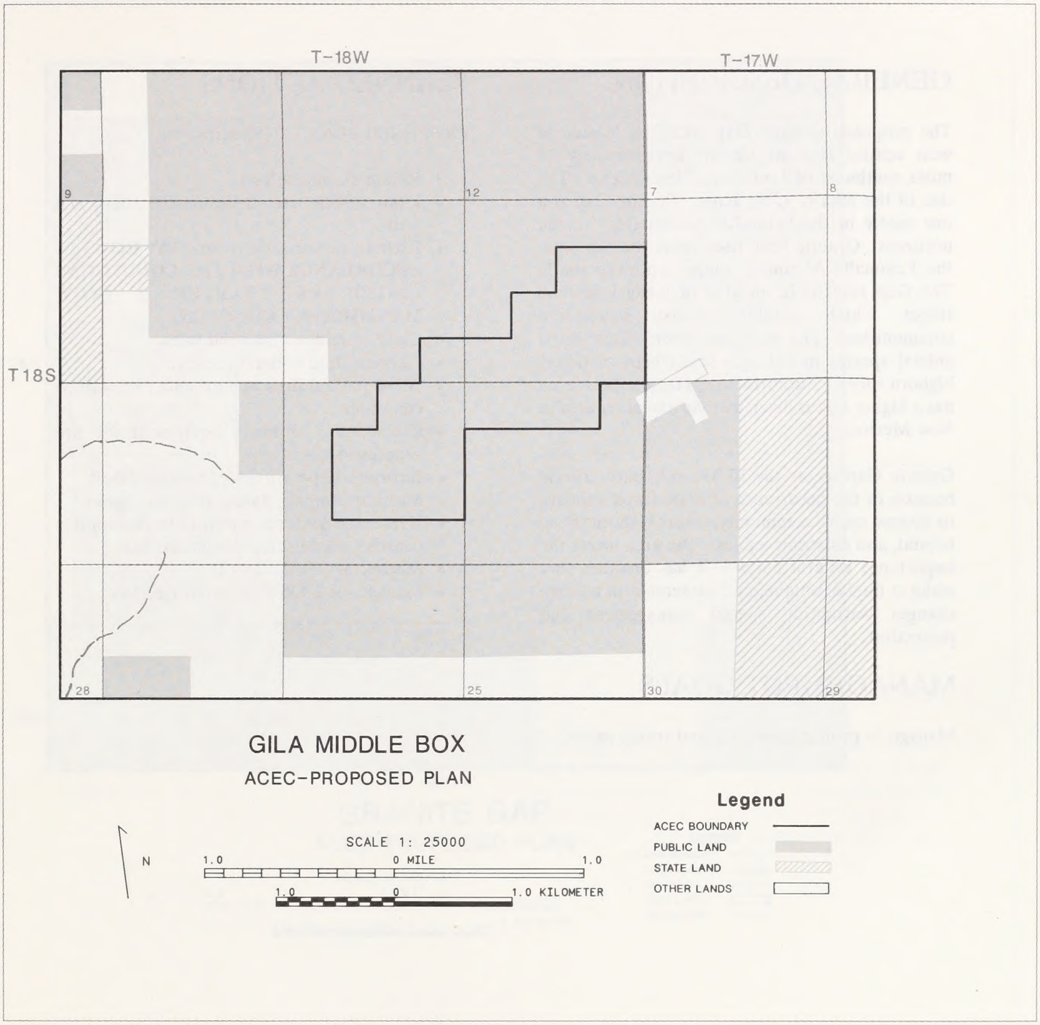
MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage to protect riparian values.

PLANNED ACTIONS

PROPOSED PLAN - 840 acres

- Retain all public land.
- Close to vehicle use.
- Exclude authorizations for **NEW ROWs IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN).**
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Acquire legal public access.
- Secure guaranteed instream flow when State law allows.
- Manage as VRM Class II.
- Incorporate provisions of existing ACEC management plan.
- Manage for ROS semi-primitive nonmotorized class.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ACEC BOUNDARY
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GILA MIDDLE BOX

ACEC-PROPOSED PLAN

GRANITE GAP ACEC

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The proposed Granite Gap ACEC is located in west central Hidalgo County approximately 24 miles southwest of Lordsburg, New Mexico. The size of the area is 1,750 acres. Granite Gap is a low saddle in the Peloncillo Mountains. To the northwest, Granite Peak rises above the gap while the Peloncillo Mountain range continues south. The Gap itself is in an area of rocky limestone ridges which exhibit diverse vegetation communities. The area has several State-listed animal species including a small herd of desert bighorn sheep. Authorities also feel that this area has a higher cactus diversity than any other area in New Mexico.

Granite Gap meets the BLM's relevance criteria because of the occurrence of State-listed animals, its diverse cactus community, desert bighorn sheep habitat, and its scenic values. The area meets the importance criteria because it has qualities that make it fragile, unique, and vulnerable to adverse changes warranting special management and protection.

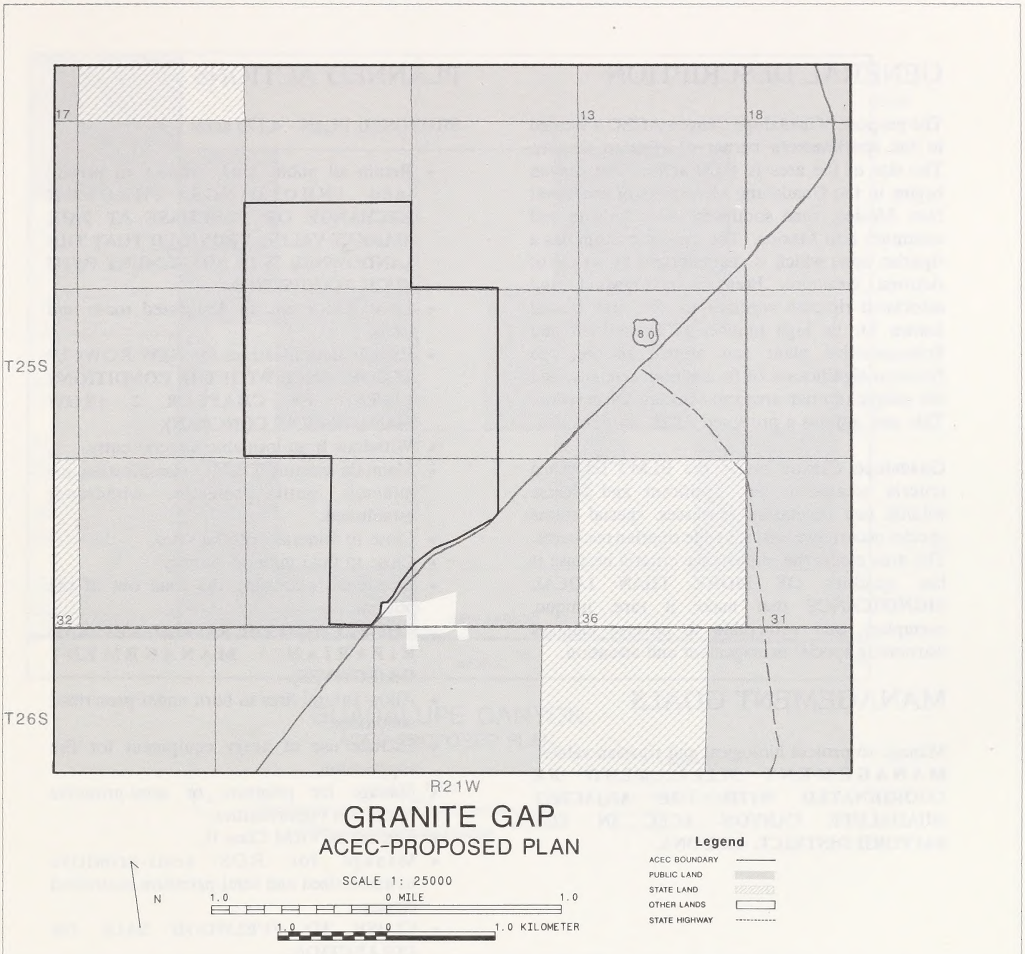
MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage to protect biological and scenic values.

PLANNED ACTIONS

PROPOSED PLAN - 1,750 acres

- Retain all public land.
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails.
- Exclude authorizations for **NEW** ROWs **IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN).**
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Allow natural fires to burn under prescribed conditions.
- Exclude use of heavy equipment for fire suppression.
- Incorporate provisions of existing HMP.
- Monitor camping during javelina season.
- If resource conflicts appear to be developing, consider establishing designated sites.
- Manage as VRM Class I.
- Manage for ROS semi-primitive class.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SCALE 1: 25000
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Legend
ACEC BOUNDARY
PUBLIC LAND
STATE LAND
OTHER LANDS
STATE HIGHWAY

GRANITE GAP
ACEC-PROPOSED PLAN

GUADALUPE CANYON ACEC

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The proposed Guadalupe Canyon ACEC is located in the southwestern corner of Hidalgo County. The size of the area is 4,170 acres. The canyon begins in the Guadalupe Mountains of southwest New Mexico, runs southwest into Arizona and continues into Mexico. The canyon bottom has a riparian zone which is characterized by stands of Arizona sycamore, Fremont cottonwood, and associated riparian vegetation. The area is well known for its high number of State-listed and State-sensitive plant and animal species, the National significance of its avifauna diversity, and the unique riparian area and associated vegetation. This area adjoins a proposed ACEC in Arizona.

Guadalupe Canyon meets the BLM's relevance criteria because it has significant and diverse wildlife and vegetation resources, special status species occurrence, and valuable riparian resources. The area meets the importance criteria because it has qualities **OF MORE THAN LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE** that make it rare, unique, exemplary, and vulnerable to adverse changes warranting special management and attention.

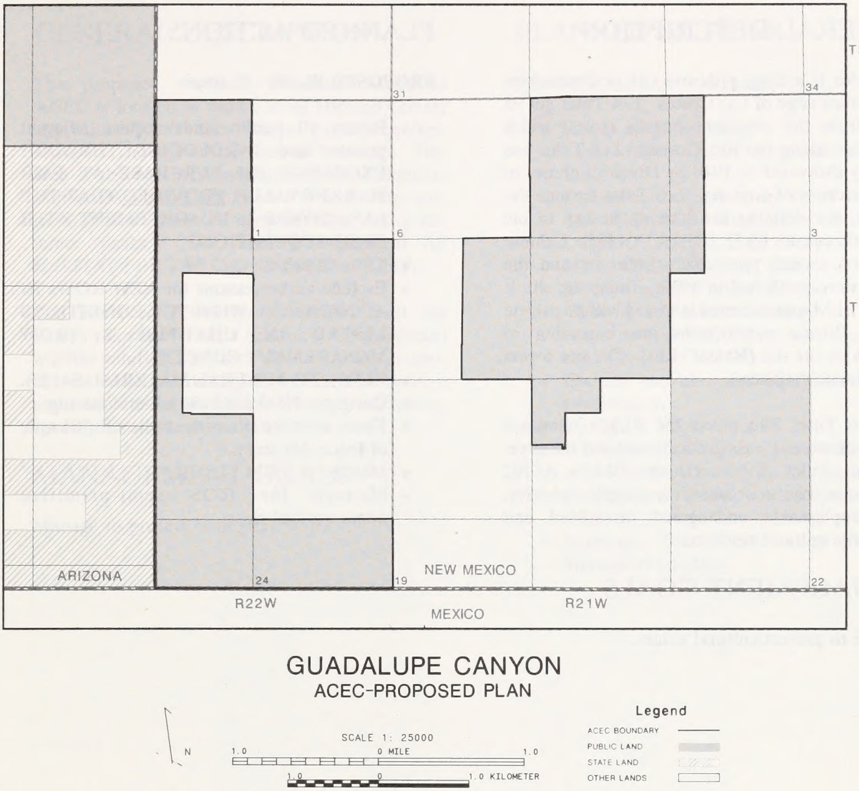
MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage to protect biological and riparian values. **MANAGEMENT WILL ALSO BE COORDINATED WITH THE ADJACENT GUADALUPE CANYON ACEC IN THE SAFFORD DISTRICT, ARIZONA.**

PLANNED ACTIONS

PROPOSED PLAN - 4,170 acres

- Retain all public land; acquire all private land **INHOLDINGS THROUGH EXCHANGE OR PURCHASE AT FAIR MARKET VALUE, PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION.**
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails.
- Exclude authorizations for **NEW** ROWs **IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN).**
- Withdraw from locatable mineral entry.
- Maintain existing C&MU classification for minerals until protective withdrawal established.
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Investigate relocating the road out of the bottom.
- **COMPLY WITH THE REVISED AMP (AND RIPARIAN MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES).**
- Allow natural fires to burn under prescribed conditions.
- Exclude use of heavy equipment for fire suppression.
- Manage for primitive or semi-primitive recreation opportunities.
- Manage as VRM Class II.
- Manage for ROS semi-primitive nonmotorized and semi-primitive motorized classes.
- **CLOSE TO FUELWOOD SALE OR COLLECTION.**


T33S
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34
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T34S
ARIZONA
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NEW MEXICO
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R22W
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SCALE 1: 25000
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ACEC BOUNDARY
PUBLIC LAND
STATE LAND
OTHER LANDS

GUADALUPE CANYON
ACEC-PROPOSED PLAN

LOS TULES ACEC

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Los Tules is a large pithouse village situated on the western edge of Las Cruces. Los Tules got its name from the abundant cattails (tules) which once grew along the Rio Grande. Los Tules was partially excavated in 1940 by Donald Lehmer of the University of Arizona. Los Tules became the type site for defining the Jornada Branch of the Mogollon culture (A.D. 200 - A.D. 1400). Lehmer excavated several pithouses at the site and the results were published in 1948. Today the site is half on BLM-administered land and half on private land. Private subdivisions are beginning to enroach on the site (Raasaf Hills). The site covers approximately 40 acres.

The Los Tules Site meets the BLM's relevance criteria because it is a significant cultural resource. The Los Tules Site meets the BLM's ACEC importance criteria because it is a fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, endangered, threatened, and vulnerable cultural resource.

MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage to protect cultural values.

PLANNED ACTIONS

PROPOSED PLAN - 20 acres

- Retain all public land; acquire adjacent private land **INHOLDINGS THROUGH EXCHANGE OR PURCHASE AT FAIR MARKET VALUE, PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION.**
- Close to vehicle use.
- Exclude authorizations for **NEW ROWs IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN).**
- **CLOSE TO MINERAL MATERIAL SALES.**
- Designate NSO for fluid mineral leasing.
- Fence or cover site with sterile fill (3/4 mile of fence; 1/4 acre).
- Manage as VRM Class II.
- Manage for ROS semi-primitive nonmotorized class.

NORTHERN PELONCILLO MOUNTAINS ACEC

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The proposed Northern Peloncillo Mountain ACEC is located in west central Hidalgo County approximately 20 miles west of Lordsburg, New Mexico. The size of the area is 760 acres. This area is the northern extension of the Peloncillo Mountains which occur in New Mexico. The area is comprised of narrow canyons, cliffs, and a few minor peaks. This area is considered **AS HABITAT FOR DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP.**

The Northern Peloncillo Mountains meet the BLM's relevance criteria because it has significant wildlife values. The area meets the importance criteria because it has qualities that are sensitive and vulnerable to adverse change warranting special management and protection.

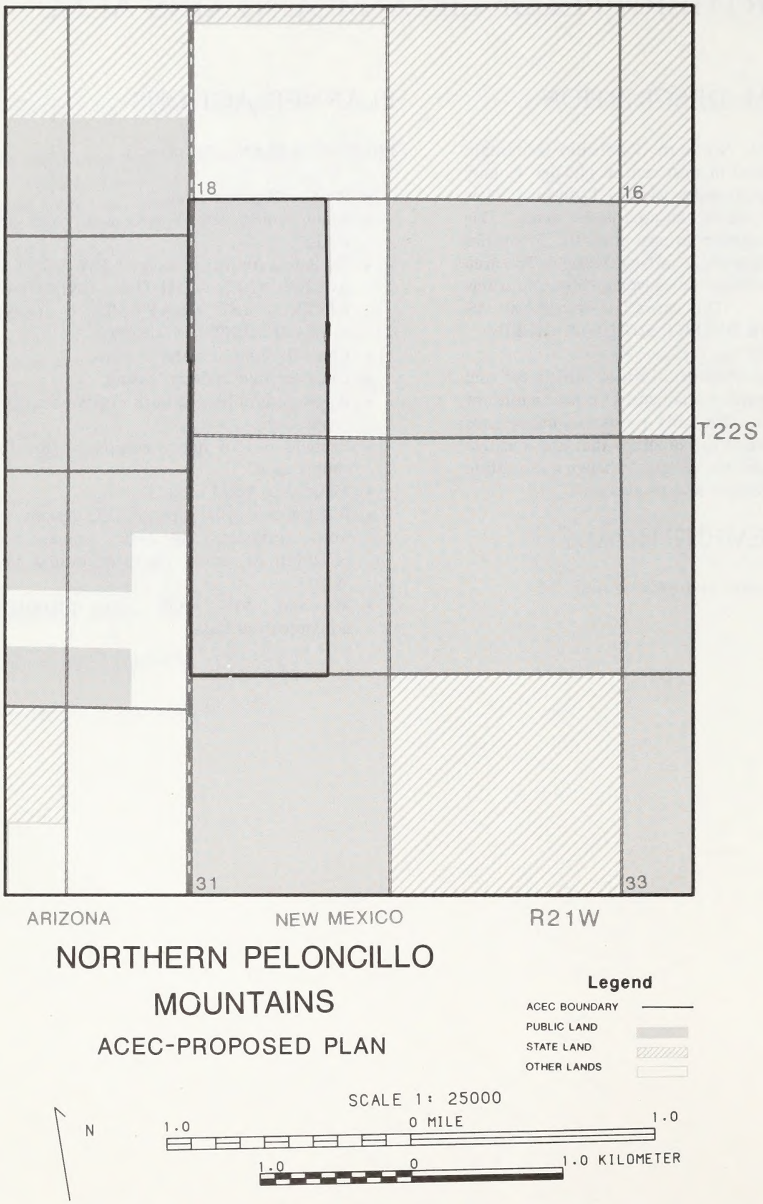
MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage to protect biological values.

PLANNED ACTIONS

PROPOSED PLAN - 760 acres

- Retain all public land.
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails.
- Exclude authorizations for **NEW** ROWs **IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN).**
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Allow natural fires to burn within prescribed conditions.
- Exclude use of heavy equipment for fire suppression.
- Manage as VRM Class II.
- If designated wilderness, ACEC designation would terminate and ACEC management prescriptions would be incorporated into WMP.
- Manage for ROS semi-primitive nonmotorized class.



NORTHERN PELONCILLO MOUNTAINS

ACEC-PROPOSED PLAN

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ARIZONA
NEW MEXICO
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ACEC BOUNDARY
PUBLIC LAND
STATE LAND
OTHER LANDS
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OLD TOWN ACEC

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Old Town is a Mimbres village site situated on a high bluff overlooking the Mimbres River valley. The site is 15 miles northwest of Deming, New Mexico. The site is well known to the general public in the Deming area, and the site has been extensively shovel pothunted for the past 100 years. It has been estimated that 1,000 whole Mimbres vessels have been stolen from the site. Little professional archaeological excavation had occurred until the summer of 1989 when the BLM sponsored an archaeological field school from Texas A&M University. The field school is now affiliated with the University of Texas at Austin. The field school determined the site to have been a two story cobble masonry pueblo with an underlying pithouse village. The main site area is approximately 5 acres in size, but the outlying associated site features cover a much larger area.

Old Town is one of several very large Classic Mimbres villages spaced fairly evenly along the main **BRANCH OF THE** Mimbres River. Many smaller Mimbres sites are found between these very large compounds. It is estimated that over 90 percent of Mimbres villages have been destroyed by pothunters utilizing heavy machinery. Old Town suffers primarily from shovel pothunting although an avocational archaeologist once cross-sectioned a portion of the site with a bulldozer. Old Town is mentioned as a possible driving tour site in the recent **MIMBRES CULTURE NATIONAL MONUMENT** national legislation. Old Town is still vulnerable to shovel and machine pothunting.

The Old Town ACEC meets the BLM's relevance criteria because it is a significant historic and cultural resource. The Old Town ACEC meets the BLM's ACEC importance criteria because it is a fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, endangered, threatened, and vulnerable cultural resource.

MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage to protect cultural values.

PLANNED ACTIONS

PROPOSED PLAN - 320 acres

- Retain all public land.
- Close to vehicle use.
- Exclude authorizations for **NEW ROWs IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN).**
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Cooperate with National Park Service (through Mimbres **CULTURE NATIONAL MONUMENT** legislation) to manage and interpret the site.
- Enlarge existing exclosure to include all features and living areas (1 mile of fence).
- Continue research (extract information from site and document status and location of excavated materials).
- Manage as VRM Class II.
- Manage for ROS semi-primitive nonmotorized class.

ORGAN/FRANKLIN MOUNTAINS ACEC

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Organ and Franklin Mountains have been proposed for designation as a National Conservation Area (NCA). These mountains run north and south through southeastern Dona Ana County. The Organs are characterized by jagged gray spires of quartz monzonite in the northern portion of the range, and massive blocks of red rhyolite interspersed with volcanic tuffs in the southern portion. Springs occur in major canyon bottoms and support valuable riparian ecosystems including rare endemic plants. **SIGNIFICANT RIPARIAN AREAS INCLUDE ICE CANYON, FILLMORE CANYON, INDIAN HOLLOW, AND ACHENBACK CANYON.** The proposed ACEC also includes Bishop's Cap and the northern Franklin Mountains, which are composed of diverse limestones. Each limestone type supports a unique cactus community, and several cactus communities contain Federal or State endangered species. The two mountain ranges comprise some of the most spectacular scenery in southern New Mexico, with extensive viewsheds containing both interstate highways and large metropolitan populations.

The proposed ACEC meets the relevance criteria because of the significant scenic values, endangered wildlife species including the Organ Mountain chipmunk and the desert bighorn sheep, numerous endangered plant species including the Organ Mountain evening primrose and Sneed's pincushion, **NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBLE PREHISTORIC AND HISTORIC SITES SUCH AS LA CUEVA AND DRIPPING SPRINGS** and natural hazards including cliffs. The proposed ACEC meets the importance criteria because of the national significance of the resources and the fragility and sensitivity of these resources and their vulnerability to adverse change, particularly from mining, recreation uses, and illegal plant collecting.

MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage to protect biological, scenic, riparian, special status species, and cultural values.

PLANNED ACTIONS

PROPOSED PLAN - 56,480 acres

- Retain all public land; acquire all State trust and private land **INHOLDINGS THROUGH EXCHANGE OR PURCHASE AT FAIR MARKET VALUE, PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION.**
- **LIMIT VEHICLE USE TO DESIGNATED ROADS AND TRAILS EXCEPT FOR THE SCENIC ACEC PORTION WHICH IS CLOSED TO VEHICLE USE (8,840 ACRES).**
- Exclude authorizations for **NEW** ROWs **IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN) EXCEPT WITHIN EXISTING UTILITY CORRIDORS. THE EAST-WEST CORRIDOR NEAR VADO AND THE ONES RUNNING NORTH AND SOUTH WILL BE CONFINED TO A WIDTH OF ¼ MILE. THE CORRIDOR IN THE ANTHONY GAP AREA WILL BE CONFINED TO A WIDTH OF ½ MILE.**
- Withdraw from locatable mineral entry.
- Maintain existing C&MU classification for minerals until protective withdrawal established.
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Acquire legal public access.
- Manage as Class II for air quality.
- Manage mountainous portions (generally above 5,000 feet) as VRM Class I; manage other portions as VRM Class III or IV.
- Manage in accordance with Organ Mountains Coordinated Resource Management Plan.
- **PROHIBIT DOGS AND PETS AND REQUIRE HIKING ON DESIGNATED TRAILS ONLY IN UPPER ICE CANYON ABOVE THE DRIFT FENCE.**

- Manage for ROS primitive, semi-primitive nonmotorized, semi-primitive, and roaded natural classes.

- **MONITOR THE AREA IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONCEPTS OF LIMITS OF ACCEPTABLE CHANGE WITH EMPHASIS ON THE MOST BIOLOGICALLY OR CULTURALLY SENSITIVE AREAS.**

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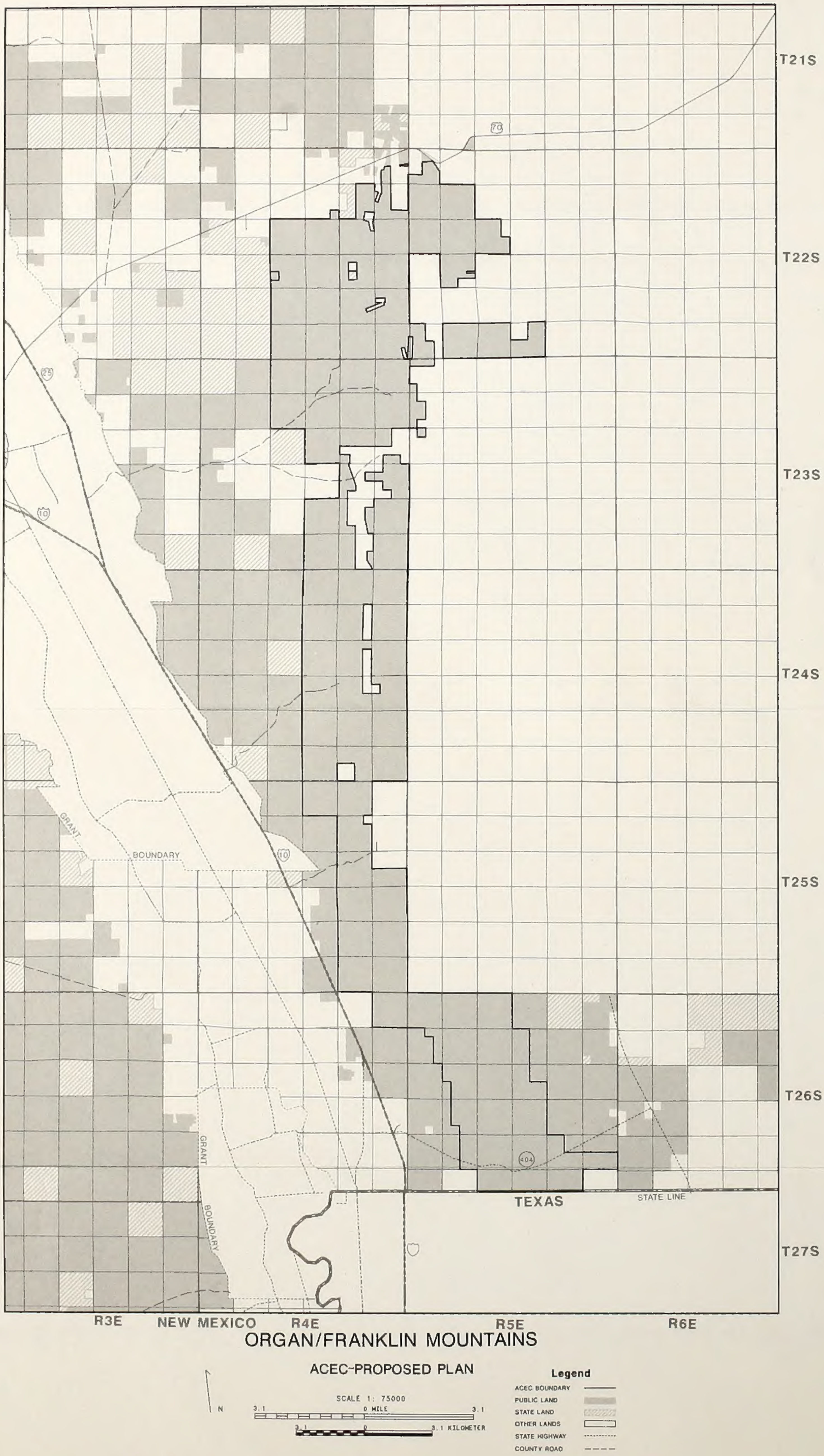
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BOUNDARY
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TEXAS
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SCALE 1: 75000
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Legend
ACEC BOUNDARY
PUBLIC LAND
STATE LAND
OTHER LANDS
STATE HIGHWAY
COUNTY ROAD

ORGAN/FRANKLIN MOUNTAINS

ACEC-PROPOSED PLAN

RINCON ACEC

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Rincon Petroglyph Site consists of numerous petroglyphs pecked onto large boulders on the south side of an unnamed mountain 1 mile north of Rincon, New Mexico. The petroglyphs are scattered over an extremely large area approximately 1.0 mile x 0.75 mile in size. The petroglyphs are occasionally clustered in steep sided canyon areas and on the top of the mountain. Some of the petroglyphs have been damaged by the construction of communication sites on top of the mountain. Most of this damage has occurred on the State trust land portion of the site. Mining prospects and treasure hunting have damaged other portions of the rock art. The petroglyphs are believed to be representative of the Jornada Mogollon culture (A.D. 200 - A.D. 1400). Because of the proximity of the site to I-25 and the communities of Hatch and Rincon, it is believed to have interpretive potential.

The Rincon Petroglyph Site meets the BLM's relevance criteria because it is a significant cultural resource. The site meets the BLM's ACEC importance criteria because it is a fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, endangered, threatened, and vulnerable cultural resource.

MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage to protect cultural values.

PLANNED ACTIONS

PROPOSED PLAN - 840 acres

- Retain all public land; acquire all State trust land in south half of Section 32 **THROUGH EXCHANGE OR PURCHASE AT FAIR MARKET VALUE, PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION.**
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails.
- Exclude **NEW** ROW authorizations **OUTSIDE EXISTING SITES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN).**
- Close to mineral material sales outside existing rock quarry.
- Designate NSO **FOR MINERAL LEASING** within 100 feet of petroglyph site.
- Evaluate potential to interpret the petroglyphs.
- Manage as VRM Class II.
- Manage for semi-primitive nonmotorized class.

ROBLEDO MOUNTAINS ACEC

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Robledo Mountains are located 8 miles northwest of Las Cruces in central Dona Ana County. The Robledos are composed of a massive block of Paleozoic sedimentary rocks and Cenozoic igneous rock. The Robledos also provide a spectacular scenic quality to the inhabitants of the northern Mesilla Valley. The Robledos support a high diversity of cacti including the State endangered button cactus and Scheer's pincushion cactus, and provide important habitat for uncommon reptiles. The Madrean alligator lizard occurs in a relict population here that represents the easternmost limit of the species' range. Other reptiles reach the northern or western limits of their range here, such as the Trans-Pecos rat snake. Recent genetic research has shown that peripheral populations of animals along the edge of a species' range often contain very different genotypes from most of the populations of that species, making those peripheral populations very important for allowing adaptability to environmental change that is crucial for species survival. Finally, some of the earliest known prehistoric habitation sites in southern New Mexico are in the Robledo Mountains.

The Robledos meet the relevance criteria of having significant paleontological, cultural, and scenic values and endangered plant species. They meet the importance criteria of more than locally significant resources in terms of scenic quality which is enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of travelers on I-25 annually, and for preservation of biodiversity which is distinctive.

THE SIZE OF THE ACEC UNDER THE PROPOSED PLAN WAS REVISED FROM THE DRAFT RMP/EIS TO DELETE AREAS NOT CRITICAL TO MANAGEMENT OF THE ACEC FROM THE BASE OF THE MOUNTAINS.

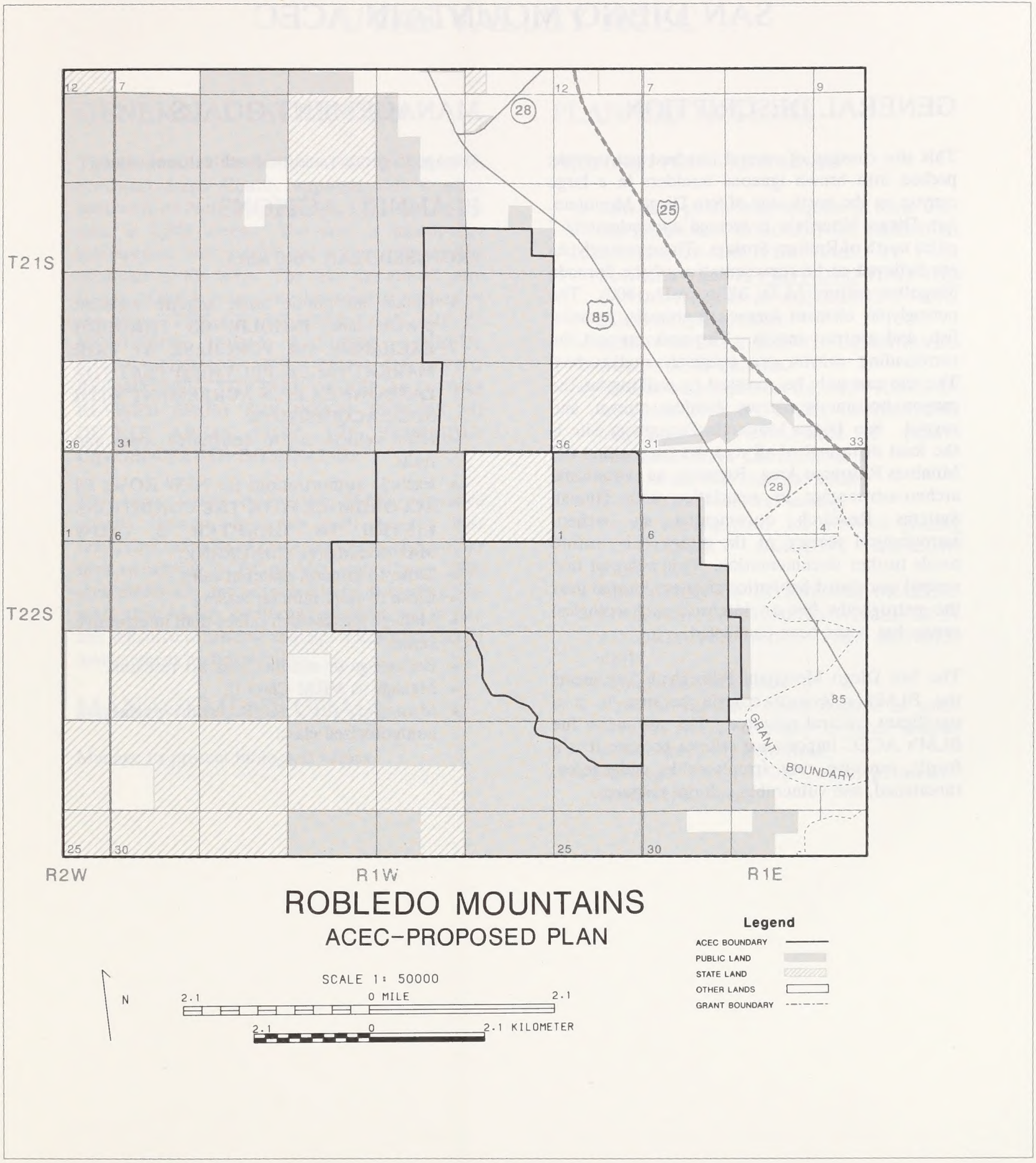
MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage to protect biological and scenic values and to protect, research, and interpret paleontological values.

PLANNED ACTIONS

PROPOSED PLAN - 9,190 ACRES

- Retain all public land; acquire all State trust land **INHOLDINGS THROUGH EXCHANGE OR PURCHASE AT FAIR MARKET VALUE, PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION.**
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails.
- Exclude authorizations for **NEW ROWs IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN).**
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Acquire legal public access.
- Maintain current livestock grazing practices.
- Allow natural fires to burn under prescribed conditions.
- Manage for primitive and semi-primitive recreation opportunities (no developed facilities).
- Manage as VRM Class I.
- Manage for ROS primitive and semi-primitive nonmotorized classes.



ROBLEDO MOUNTAINS

ACEC-PROPOSED PLAN

T21S
T22S
R2W
R1W
R1E
12
7
12
7
9
36
31
36
31
33
1
6
1
6
4
25
30
25
30
28
25
85
28
85
GRANT BOUNDARY
N
SCALE 1: 50000
2.1
0 MILE
2.1
2.1
0
2.1 KILOMETER
Legend
ACEC BOUNDARY
PUBLIC LAND
STATE LAND
OTHER LANDS
GRANT BOUNDARY

SAN DIEGO MOUNTAIN ACEC

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This site consists of several hundred petroglyphs pecked into brown igneous boulders in a large canyon on the north side of San Diego Mountain. San Diego Mountain is located approximately 7 miles north of Radium Springs. These petroglyphs are believed to be representative of the Jornada Mogollon culture (A.D. 200 to A.D. 1400). The petroglyphs element forms are animals, humans, fish, and abstract motifs. The rock art and the surrounding canyon are relatively undisturbed. The site can only be accessed by walking, as the canyon bottom is narrow, boulder strewn, and rugged. San Diego Mountain Petroglyph Site is the least disturbed of all rock art sites within the Mimbres Resource Area. Recently, an avocational archeo-astronomer in association with Human Systems Research documented an archeo-astronomical feature at the site. This feature needs further documentation. It is believed that several associated habitation sites are located near the petroglyphs but an intensive archaeological survey has never been conducted.

The San Diego Mountain Petroglyph Site meets the BLM's relevance criteria because it is a significant cultural resource. The site meets the BLM's ACEC importance criteria because it is a fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, endangered, threatened, and vulnerable cultural resource.

MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage to protect and research cultural values.

PLANNED ACTIONS

PROPOSED PLAN - 640 acres

- Retain all public land; acquire adjacent private land **INHOLDINGS THROUGH EXCHANGE OR PURCHASE AT FAIR MARKET VALUE, PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION.**
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails.
- Exclude authorizations for **NEW ROWs IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN)**.
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Manage for research rather than interpretive value.
- Encourage or conduct rock art research.
- Manage as VRM Class II.
- Manage for ROS semi-primitive nonmotorized class.

UVAS VALLEY ACEC

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The proposed Uvas Valley ACEC is located in northeast Luna County approximately 8 miles southeast of Nutt, New Mexico. The size of the area is **1,570** acres. The area is mostly flat interspersed with swales and rolling hills on the west side of the area. The area has almost pure stands of black grama on the western portion of the area. **THE GRASSLANDS THAT ARE IN EXISTENCE TODAY REFLECT CAREFUL STEWARDSHIP BY THE GRAZING PERMITTEES. THE SIZE OF THE ACEC WAS REVISED FROM THE DRAFT RMP/EIS TO DELETE AREAS THAT ARE PRIMARILY CREOSOTEBUSH DOMINATED.**

The Uvas Valley meets the BLM's relevance criteria because this may well be the best remaining example of black grama grassland other than an existing ACEC on McGregor Range. The area meets the importance criteria because it has more than locally significant qualities and is rare and sensitive to adverse changes warranting special management and protection.

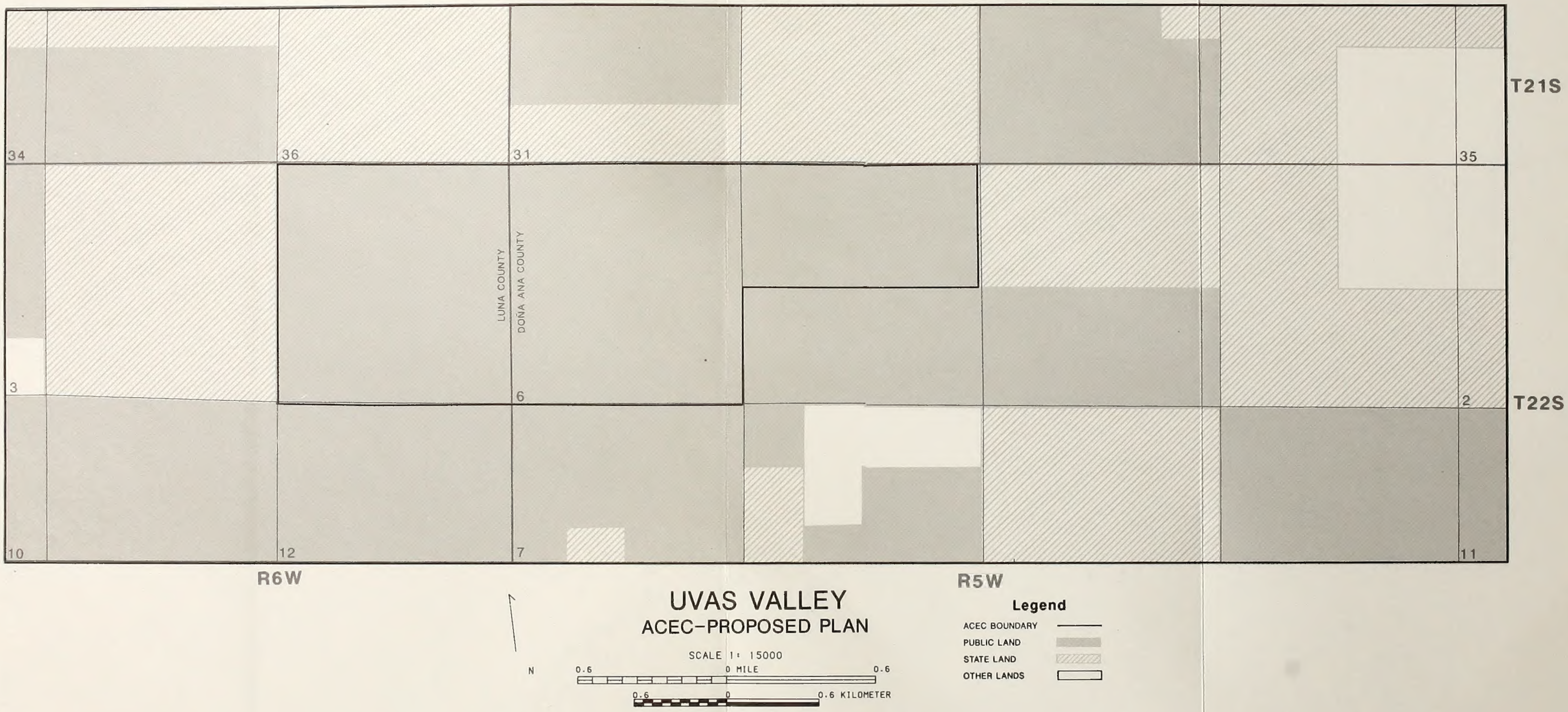
MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage to protect biological values.

PLANNED ACTIONS

PROPOSED PLAN - 1,570 ACRES

- Retain all public land; acquire all State trust and private land **INHOLDINGS THROUGH EXCHANGE OR PURCHASE AT FAIR MARKET VALUE, PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION.**
- **LIMIT VEHICLE USE TO DESIGNATED ROADS AND TRAILS.**
- Exclude authorizations for **NEW** ROWs **IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN).**
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Revise existing AMP for livestock grazing **TO REFLECT CURRENT GRAZING PRACTICES.**
- **EXCLUSION OF LIVESTOCK GRAZING FOLLOWING A WILDFIRE WOULD BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REVISED AMP.**
- Manage as VRM Class II.
- Consider chemical brush control in some portions where necessary to meet desired plant community objectives.
- Manage for ROS semi-primitive nonmotorized class.



UVAS VALLEY
ACEC–PROPOSED PLAN

T21S
T22S
R6W
R5W
34
36
31
35
3
6
2
10
12
7
11
LUNA COUNTY
DOÑA ANA COUNTY
N
SCALE 1: 15000
0.6
0 MILE
0.6
0.6
0
0.6 KILOMETER
Legend
ACEC BOUNDARY
PUBLIC LAND
STATE LAND
OTHER LANDS

APPENDIX H-2
SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS--TRAILS

This appendix contains general descriptions of two Special Management Areas (SMAs) identified in this Resource Management Plan (RMP).

The narratives for each SMA include a general description, management goals, and management prescriptions.

BUTTERFIELD TRAIL

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

In 1857, John Butterfield was awarded a mail contract to establish the Butterfield Overland Mail Company. The Butterfield stage carried mail and passengers from St. Louis, Missouri to San Francisco, California. In New Mexico, the "Butterfield Trail" ran east/west across southern New Mexico from El Paso, Texas to the Doubtful Canyon station north of Steins, New Mexico and then into Arizona. Stage stations of adobe and rock masonry were built at watering points along the trail. The U.S. Government ordered closure of the line in March of 1861 in response to Texas Secession from the Union. **BEFORE AND** after 1861, the **ROUTE OF THE** Butterfield Trail was utilized as the southern emigrant trail to California.

The Butterfield Trail and associated stage station localities are considered to have significant regional, historical, and archaeological significance. The remains of the trail and stations are fragile and nonrenewable cultural resources which are deserving of preservation, research, and interpretation to the general public.

MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage to protect and interpret historical values.

PLANNED ACTIONS

PROPOSED PLAN - 15,690 acres

- Retain all public land; acquire all State trust and private land (with emphasis on stage stations) **INHOLDINGS THROUGH EXCHANGE OR PURCHASE AT FAIR MARKET VALUE, PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION.**
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails.
- Restrict authorizations for ROWs.
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Designate NSO **FOR MINERAL LEASING** within ¼ mile of trail.
- Manage in accordance with existing Cultural Resource Management Plan.
- Interpret with emphasis on passive interpretation such as signing.
- Manage as VRM Class II.
- Manage for ROS semi-primitive motorized class.

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail was established as part of the National Scenic Trail System by Public Law 95-625, the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978, which amended the National Trails Act of 1968. **CONGRESS ESTABLISHED A SCENIC CORRIDOR 50 MILES ON EITHER SIDE OF THE ACTUAL CONTINENTAL DIVIDE, WITH THE TREADWAY OR CORRIDOR FOR THE TRAIL TO BE PROPOSED THROUGH THE PLANNING OF THE RESPECTIVE LAND MANAGING AGENCY. THE RMP CONSIDERS THREE ALTERNATIVE TRAIL CORRIDOR ROUTES WITH A SPUR OR SIDE TRAIL THROUGH THE COOKE'S RANGE AND FLORIDA MOUNTAINS FOR ALL ALTERNATIVES.**

The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail contains significant scenic values along the length of the trail. It has National significance and could soon have International significance if Mexico follows through with plans to continue the trail south of the border.

MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage to maintain scenic and primitive recreation values in accordance with the enabling legislation.

PLANNED ACTIONS

PROPOSED PLAN - 48,450 acres

- Retain all public land; acquire all State trust and private land **INHOLDINGS THROUGH EXCHANGE OR PURCHASE AT FAIR MARKET VALUE, PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION**.
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails that cross the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail.
- Restrict authorizations for ROWs.
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Designate NSO **FOR MINERAL LEASING** within ½ mile of the trail.
- Designate the trail (Forest Service lead).
- Mark and/or construct the route.
- Develop four trailheads/parking areas (1 acre).
- Manage as VRM Class II.
- Manage for ROS semi-primitive nonmotorized class.

APPENDIX H-2 SUPPLEMENT
CONTINENTAL DIVIDE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL ALTERNATIVE ROUTE COMPARISON

ZONE OF CONCERN

The zone of concern for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail includes all public land within 50 airline miles of the Continental Divide. This zone includes most of the public land in Luna, Grant, and Hidalgo Counties with the exception of public land in northeastern Luna County.

RIGHTS-OF-WAY

The BLM does not issue itself rights-of-way for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail on public land. A corridor of varying widths is proposed for each alternative route. For easements across non-Federal lands, a 30-foot width will be pursued.

TREADWAY

Because of the open nature of the public lands under these alternatives and the low level of use along the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail in the Resource Area, no tread construction is anticipated. The selected route will be marked at irregular intervals frequently enough to allow easy orientation if this approach is formally approved by the Chief of the Forest Service upon designation.

ALTERNATIVE ROUTE COMPARISON

Alternative A

No route is proposed for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail under Alternative A. A decision on the location of the CDNST through the Mimbres Resource Area would be deferred pending subsequent land use planning efforts.

Alternative B

In this alternative, the proposed route is along the main ridgeline of the Continental Divide from the end of the designated Continental Divide National Scenic Trail on the Gila National Forest at the southern end of the Burro Mountains to the Mexican Border in the San Luis Mountains, and then east along the International Border to the Antelope Wells Port of Entry. This route closely follows the Continental Divide, with minor deviations to stay on public land as much as possible. The main Divide route is approximately 119 miles long with 77 miles of the trail on public land. The BLM would need to acquire easements for the trail across 17 miles of State trust land and 25 miles of private land. This route has views of the Burro Mountains in the north, traverses the Cedar Mountains ridgeline with views of the Florida and Big Hatchet Mountains, and then swings west and south through the Pyramid and Animas Mountains with views of the Peloncillo, Little Hatchet, Big Hatchet, and Alamo Hueco Mountains. The southern portion of the route cuts off the Divide to the Antelope Wells Port of Entry, bypassing Animas Peak and other portions of the Gray Ranch containing sensitive animals and plants. This route deviates from the Continental Divide by up to 12 miles, but is within 2 miles of the Divide for the majority of its length. This route provides a fairly gentle grade along most of the route, with some steep mountaintops in the Cedar Mountains and along the Cowboy Rim in the Animas Mountains.

Alternative C

In this alternative, the proposed route is from the Burro Mountains southwest across the Lordsburg Playa to the Peloncillo Mountains and then south along the main ridgeline of the Peloncillos to the International Border following public land as much as possible. This route would not connect with the designated Continental Divide National Scenic Trail on the Gila National Forest, and would require additional planning efforts on the parts of the Gila and Coronado National Forests to connect trail segments, plus the BLM Safford District to connect the southern terminus of the trail with the International Port of Entry at Douglas, Arizona. This route is 110 miles long, with 71 miles on BLM-administered public land and 27 miles on the Coronado National Forest. The BLM would need to acquire easements for the trail across 7 miles of State trust land and 5 miles of private land. This route has views of the Pyramid and Animas Mountains to the east and the Chirichua Mountains to the west. This route averages approximately 18 to 20 miles deviation from the Continental Divide, and provides a substantial amount of steep mountain hiking in the Peloncillos.

Proposed Plan

The proposed route is from the designated Continental Divide National Scenic Trail south along the Divide to the Little Hatchet Mountains, south along the ridgeline of the Little Hatchet Mountains, up Thompson Canyon to Big Hatchet Peak and then south along the east side of U-Bar Ridge and the west side of the Alamo Hueco Mountains to the Antelope Wells Port of Entry following public land as much as possible. This route is 130 miles long, with 93 miles on public land. The BLM would need to acquire easements for the trail across 16 miles of State trust land and 21 miles of private land. This route provides views of the Burro, Florida, Big Hatchet, Pyramid, Animas, and Alamo Hueco Mountains. This route averages approximately 10 miles deviation from the Continental Divide, with the northern half of the route very close to the Divide, and the southern half approximately 18 miles from the Divide on the average. This route provides gentle grades over much of the route with steep mountaintop hiking in the Cedar, Little Hatchet, and Big Hatchet Mountains. This route also provides spectacular views of the Sierra Madre Occidental in Mexico, with the best views from the top of Big Hatchet Peak.

Florida Mountains

This route does not connect with the designated Continental Divide National Scenic Trail on the Gila National Forest, but was considered because at the time this planning document was initiated, the Gila route was not yet finalized. The Gila National Forest subsequently made a final determination, selecting the Burro Mountains route for the trail, which does not connect with the proposed Florida Mountains side trail. The route will be considered as a potential official side trail to the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail based on the final decision of the Gila National Forest to leave open the option of designating the Mimbres Mountain Route as a side trail, which could be connected to the Florida Mountain route. This proposed route was selected to follow public land as much as possible, and runs down the length of the Cooke's Range, through Deming, southeast along the ridgeline of the Little Florida Mountains, and south along the east side of the Florida Mountains to the port of entry at Columbus. The proposed route is 93 miles long, with 57 miles on public land. The BLM would need to acquire trail easements across 14 miles of State trust land and 22 miles of private land. It would connect the southern end of the Black Range to the Columbus port of entry. This route would provide views of the Black Range, the Cooke's Range, and the Florida Mountains. This route averages over 40 miles deviation from the Continental Divide, with over 50 miles deviation in the southern portion. It would pass close to Fort Cummings and prehistoric sites associated with the proposed Cooke's Range ACEC. This route provides gentle, steep, and precipitous grades including some cliffs.

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APPENDIX H-3
RESEARCH NATURAL AREAS (RNAs) AND NATIONAL NATURAL LANDMARK (NNL)

This appendix contains the management prescriptions for four RNAs and one NNL that are proposed to be designated or maintained under the Proposed Plan. RNA designations will focus on encouraging and facilitating active research in those areas.

ADEN LAVA FLOW RNA

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

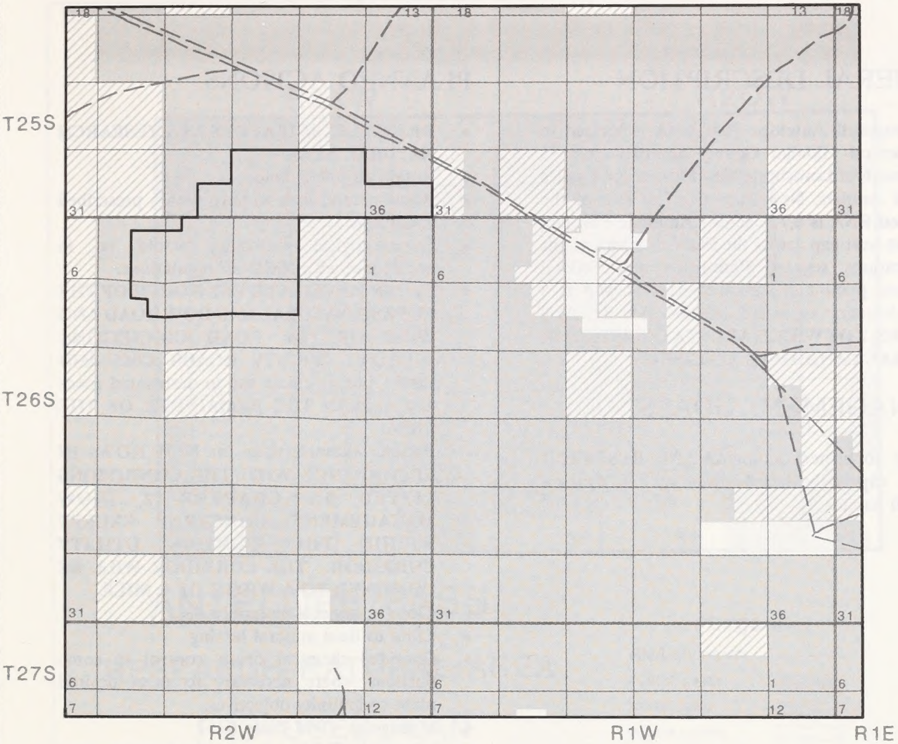
The Aden Lava Flow **RESEARCH NATIONAL AREA (RNA)** is located in central Dona Ana County, approximately 20 miles southwest of Las Cruces, New Mexico. The lava flow is a nearly flat landform with steep walled depressions which vary in size and shape. The area also contains crevices, pressure ridges, and lava tubes. The most prominent feature of the lava flow is Aden Crater located in the northwest part of the area and is currently designated as an RNA. The area has significant scenic and geologic values as well as interesting wildlife and wildlife habitat features.

MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage to protect biological, scenic, geological, and research values.

PLANNED ACTIONS

- **MAINTAIN THE EXISTING RNA DESIGNATION ON 3,930 ACRES.**
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails.
- Exclude authorizations for **NEW ROWs IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN).**
- Close to mineral materials sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing
- Consider chemical brush control in some portions where necessary to meet desired plant community objectives.
- Research and interpret paleontological and geological features.
- Establish research permitting/information exchange process.
- Designate parking area (¼ acre) and trail to Crater.
- Manage as VRM Class II.
- Manage for ROS primitive and semi-primitive nonmotorized classes.


18
13
18
13
18
T25S
31
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31
6
1
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T26S
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36
31
36
31
T27S
6
1
6
1
6
7
12
7
12
7
R2W
R1W
R1E

ADEN LAVA FLOW
RESEARCH NATURAL AREA
PROPOSED PLAN

N

SCALE 1: 75000

3.1 0 MILE 3.1

3.1 0 3.1 KILOMETER

Legend

RNA BOUNDARY ——

PUBLIC LAND ▒

STATE LAND ▨

OTHER LANDS ☐

ANTELOPE PASS RNA

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

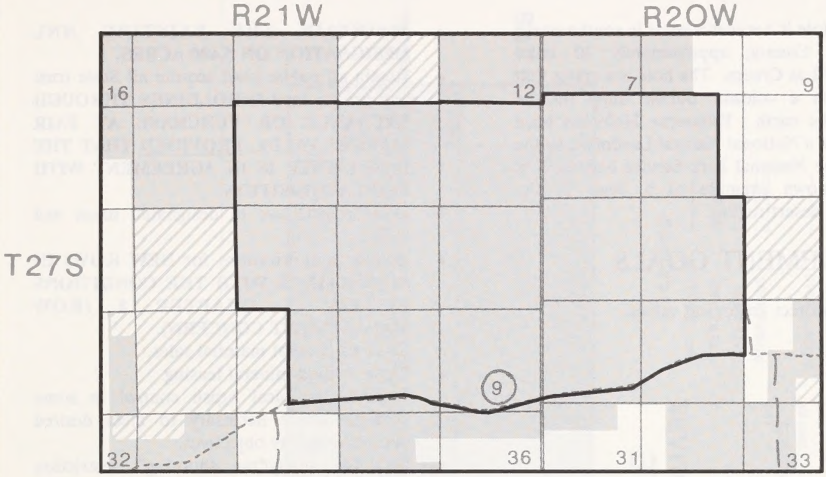
The proposed Antelope Pass **RNA** is located in west central Hidalgo County approximately 35 miles south of Lordsburg, New Mexico and 6 miles west of Animas, New Mexico. The size of the proposed **RNA** is 8,710 acres. Antelope Pass is a low east-west gap across the Peloncillo Mountains and features several State-listed and Federal candidate plant and animal species as well as a great diversity of lizard species **(19 KNOWN SPECIES, 2 OF WHICH ARE STATE-LISTED OR FEDERAL CANDIDATE SPECIES)**.

MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage to protect biological **AND RESEARCH** values, especially lizard diversity and Dixon's whiptail habitat.

PLANNED ACTIONS

- **DESIGNATE 8,710 ACRES AS A RESEARCH NATURAL AREA.**
- Retain all public land.
- Allow natural fires to burn within prescribed conditions.
- Herpetological collecting would be in accordance with NMDGF regulations.
- **CLOSE TO VEHICLE USE NORTH OF THE EL PASO NATURAL GAS ROW ROAD AND WEST OF THE ROAD CONNECTING HIDALGO COUNTY ROADS C065 AND C079.** Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails **IN THE REMAINDER OF THE AREA.**
- Exclude authorizations for **NEW** ROWs **IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN) EXCEPT WITHIN THE EXISTING UTILITY CORRIDOR. THE CORRIDOR WILL BE CONFINED TO A WIDTH OF ¼ MILE.**
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Consider chemical brush control in some portions where necessary to meet desired plant community objectives.
- Manage as VRM Class II.
- Manage for ROS semi-primitive nonmotorized and semi-primitive motorized classes.


R21W
R20W
T27S
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12
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32
36
31
33
Legend
RNA BOUNDARY
PUBLIC LAND
STATE LAND
OTHER LANDS
STATE HIGHWAY
COUNTY ROAD
3.1
0 MILE
3.1
3.1
0
3.1 KILOMETER

ANTELOPE PASS

RESEARCH NATURAL AREA

PROPOSED PLAN

Legend

RNA BOUNDARY	──
PUBLIC LAND	▩
STATE LAND	▨
OTHER LANDS	☐
STATE HIGHWAY	┈┈┈
COUNTY ROAD	– – –

3.1 — 0 MILE — 3.1

3.1 — 0 — 3.1 KILOMETER

KILBOURNE HOLE NNL

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

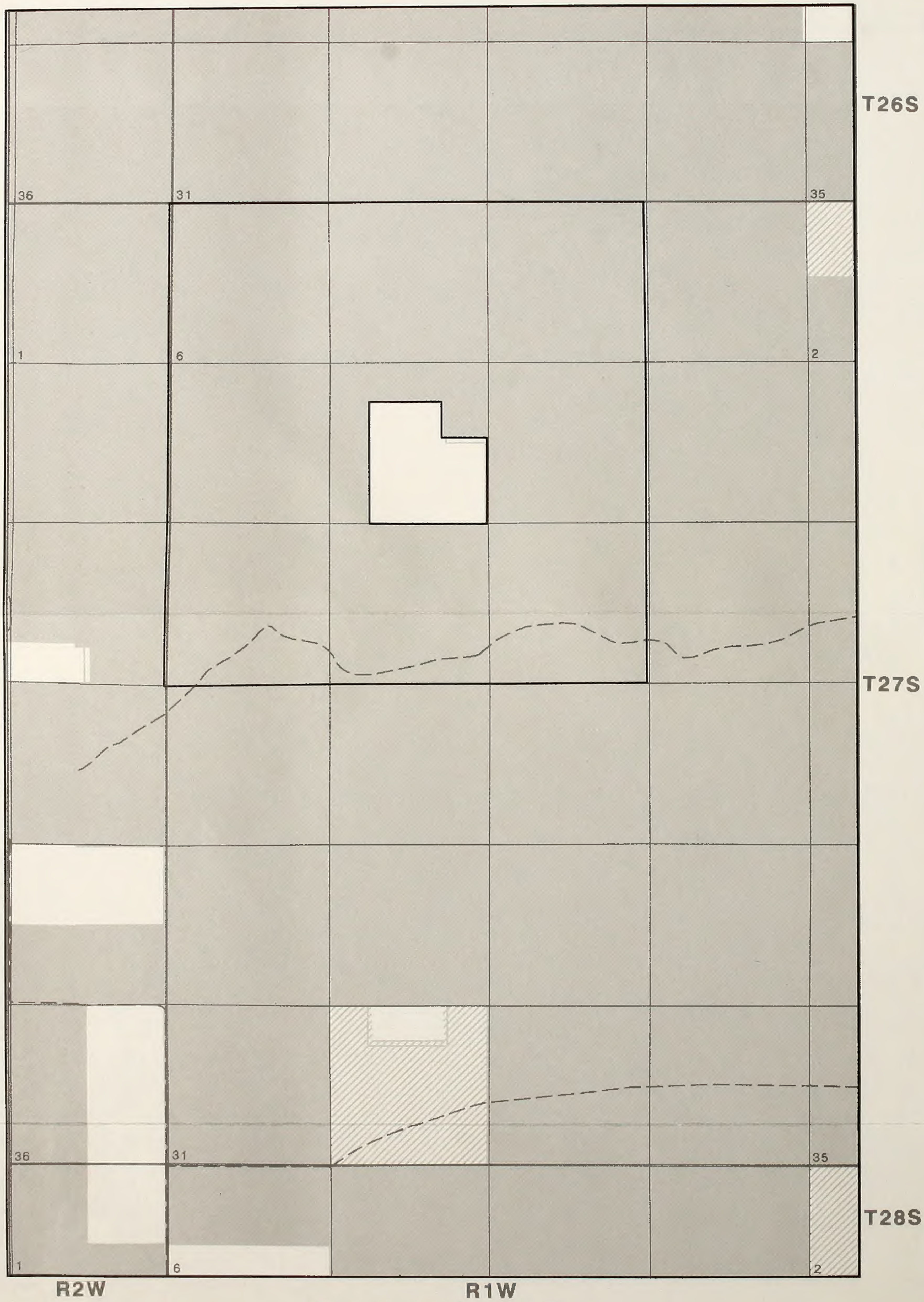
Kilbourne Hole is a volcanic maar in southwestern Dona Ana County, approximately 20 miles southwest of Las Cruces. The hole is a crater that formed when a volcanic bubble burst on the surface of the earth. Kilbourne Hole has been designated as a National Natural Landmark by the BLM and the National Park Service because it is the best known example of a maar in the Chihuahuan desert region.

MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage to protect geological values.

PLANNED ACTIONS

- **MAINTAIN THE EXISTING NNL DESIGNATION ON 5,480 ACRES.**
- Retain all public land; acquire all State trust and private land **INHOLDINGS THROUGH EXCHANGE OR PURCHASE AT FAIR MARKET VALUE, PROVIDED THAT THE LANDOWNER IS IN AGREEMENT WITH SUCH ACQUISITION.**
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails.
- Exclude authorizations for **NEW ROWs IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN).**
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Consider chemical brush control in some portions where necessary to meet desired plant community objectives.
- Establish safety/"no shooting" restriction within the rim.
- Interpret geological features by signing.
- Establish primitive facilities (parking area, tables, toilets)(2 acres).
- Manage as VRM Class II.
- Manage for ROS semi-primitive motorized class.


T26S
T27S
T28S
R2W
R1W
36
31
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KILBOURNE HOLE
NATIONAL NATURAL LANDMARK
PROPOSED PLAN

SCALE 1: 25000

N

1.0 0 MILE 1.0

1.0 0 1.0 KILOMETER

Legend

NNL BOUNDARY ———
PUBLIC LAND ▩
STATE LAND ▨
OTHER LANDS ☐
COUNTY ROAD – – – –

LORDSBURG PLAYA RNA

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

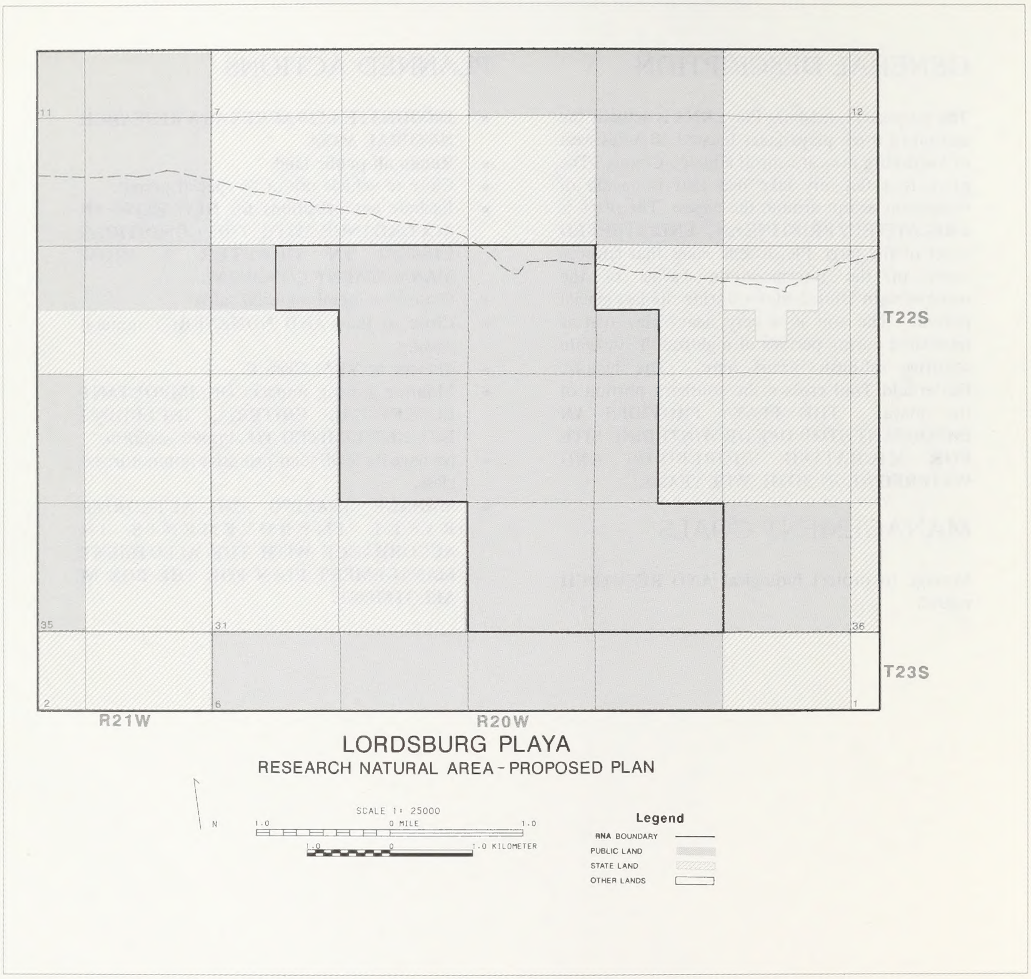
The proposed Lordsburg Playa **RNA** is actually the central of three playa lakes located 10 miles west of Lordsburg in west-central Hidalgo County. The playa is a flat, dry lake bed that is devoid of vegetation except around the edges. The playa is a **RELATIVELY PRISTINE AND UNDISTURBED** relict of the large Pleistocene lakes that covered many of the intermountain basins of the southwestern United States during the last glacial period. The soil is a very heavy clay that is inundated during periods of high runoff. A State sensitive saltbush occurs here. The historic Butterfield Trail crosses the southern portion of the playa. **THE PLAYA PROVIDES AN IMPORTANT STOP-OFF OR WINTERING SITE FOR MIGRATING SHOREBIRDS AND WATERFOWL IN SOME WET YEARS.**

MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage to protect biological **AND RESEARCH** values.

PLANNED ACTIONS

- **DESIGNATE 4,510 ACRES AS A RESEARCH NATURAL AREA.**
- Retain all public land.
- Close to vehicle use or by special permit.
- Exclude authorizations for **NEW** ROWs **IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN).**
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid **AND NONENERGY** mineral leasing.
- Manage as VRM Class II.
- Monitor grazing impacts **ON IMPORTANT ECOLOGICAL CRITERIA, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO** *Atriplex griffithsii.*
- Manage for ROS semi-primitive nonmotorized class.
- **MANAGE GRAZING AND AUTHORIZE RANGE IMPROVEMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE BOX M ALLOTMENT.**



LORDSBURG PLAYA

RESEARCH NATURAL AREA - PROPOSED PLAN

11
7
12
T22S
35
31
36
T23S
2
6
1
R21W
R20W
N
SCALE 1: 25000
1.0
0 MILE
1.0
1.0
0
1.0 KILOMETER
Legend
RNA BOUNDARY
PUBLIC LAND
STATE LAND
OTHER LANDS

PALEOZOIC TRACKWAYS RNA

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

THE PALEOZOIC TRACKWAYS SITE IS LOCATED ON PUBLIC LAND IN THE ROBLEDO MOUNTAINS IN CENTRAL DONA ANA COUNTY IN SOUTH-CENTRAL NEW MEXICO, APPROXIMATELY 5 MILES NORTHWEST OF LAS CRUCES. THE ROBLEDOS ARE COMPOSED OF PALEOZOIC SEDIMENTARY ROCKS (LOWER ORDOVICIAN TO LOWER PERMIAN) AND CENOZOIC (YOUNGER) CLASTIC, VOLCANIC AND INTRUSIVE ROCKS. THE SOUTHERN AND CENTRAL PART OF THE RANGE EXPOSES THE UPPER PART OF THE HUECO FORMATION AND THE INTERFINGERING ABO TONGUE OF WOLFCAMPIAN AGE (APPROXIMATELY 280 MILLION YEARS OLD). THESE EXPOSURES ARE KNOWN AS THE ABO-HUECO TRANSITIONAL ZONE MADE UP OF PRIMARILY CYCLIC DEPOSITS OF NONMARINE FINE SANDSTONE, SILTSTONE, AND MUDSTONE ALTERNATING WITH MARINE CALCAREOUS SHALE AND LIMESTONE. ANALYSIS OF THIS TRANSITIONAL ZONE INDICATES A TIDAL FLAT, SHORELINE ENVIRONMENT.

PRESERVED IN THESE DEPOSITS OF SEAWARD-FACING FOSSILIFEROUS LIMESTONE AND LAMINATED LAYERS OF SILTSTONE AND MUDSTONE, ARE THE FOOTPRINTS AND TRACKWAYS OF VERTEBRATE AND INVERTEBRATE ANIMALS THAT LIVED 240 TO 280 MILLION YEARS AGO. THEY ARE CONSIDERED BY SCIENTISTS WHO HAVE EXAMINED THEM TO BE THE LARGEST, AND SCIENTIFICALLY, THE MOST IMPORTANT PALEOZOIC FOSSIL FOOTPRINT DISCOVERY EVER MADE IN THE WESTERN UNITED STATES, AND POSSIBLY THE WORLD. THE TRACKWAYS ARE EXTREMELY DIVERSE AND VARIED, AND APPEAR TO REPRESENT A VERY BROAD SPECTRUM OF ANCIENT ANIMAL LIFE, RANGING FROM LARGE (11 FOOT LONG) FIN-BACKED REPTILES THROUGH MEDIUM AND SMALL-SIZED AMPHIBIANS TO INSECTS AND OTHER INVERTEBRATES. IN ADDITION, THERE ARE PERFECTLY PRESERVED RAIN DROP IMPRESSIONS AND WATER RIPPLE MARKS. THE POTENTIAL OF THIS SITE TO PRODUCE INFORMATION AND SPECIMENS NEW TO SCIENCE IS VIRTUALLY A CERTAINTY. THE PALEOZOIC TRACKWAYS SITE EXHIBITS WOLD-CLASS QUALITIES AND REFLECTS A CRITICAL NEED FOR STUDY, PROTECTION, PRESERVATION, AND DISPLAY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS OF SCIENTISTS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

MANAGEMENT GOALS

Manage to protect, research, and interpret paleontological values.

PLANNED ACTIONS

- **DESIGNATE 720 ACRES AS A RESEARCH NATURAL AREA.**
- Retain all public land.
- Limit vehicle use to designated roads and trails.
- Exclude authorizations for **NEW ROWs IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONDITIONS LISTED IN CHAPTER 2 (ROW MANAGEMENT CONCERN).**
- Withdraw from locatable mineral entry.
- Close to mineral material sales.
- Close to fluid mineral leasing.
- Acquire legal public access.
- Manage in accordance with recommendations provided in Trackways Study legislation.
- Interpret in accordance with study legislation.
- Manage as VRM Class II.
- Manage for ROS semi-primitive nonmotorized class.

APPENDIX I-1
WILDERNESS INVENTORY REPORT
PEÑA BLANCA

INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) exchanged lands to the State of New Mexico for lands in the Organ Mountains in 1986 and 1988. The land acquired by the BLM plus adjacent public land had not all been included in the initial inventory for wilderness suitability that was conducted in the Las Cruces District during 1979. Sections 201 and 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) provide for ongoing inventories of public land resources and identification of significant areas through the Resource Management Planning (RMP) process.

Acquisition of State trust land in the Organ Mountains has created a block of 4,441 acres of public land in the vicinity of Peña Blanca, a prominent geologic feature near the south end of the Organ Mountains. This report evaluates the wilderness study potential of the area.

SIZE

The Peña Blanca **WSA** contains 4,441 acres of public land. The area meets the size requirements of the Wilderness Act of 1964 by having "...at least 5,000 acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable it's preservation and use in an unimpaired condition." Although the area is less than 5,000 acres, it is large enough to be effectively preserved in a natural condition. Furthermore, 1,080 acres of adjacent private land that has been identified for acquisition in the Southern Rio Grande Plan Amendment and the Organ Mountains Coordinated Resource Management Plan would add sufficient acreage to bring the roadless area to 5,521 acres. Acquisition efforts for this private land are ongoing. The **WSA** is bounded on the east by the Fort Bliss Military Reservation, on the south and west by a road, and on the north end and on the northwest and southwest corners by private land.

NATURALNESS

Human imprints are substantially unnoticeable throughout the **WSA**, with the imprints consisting of livestock developments such as fences, dirt tanks, and a rock dam. Vehicle ways lead to most of the dirt tanks and rock dams. A summary of the imprints of man's work in the **WSA** is shown in Table I-1.

The interior fences are old, barbed wire and wood post fences that are not visible except from nearby. These fences are non-functional in their current condition. The boundary fence is built with steel posts and barbed wire, and is also not visible except from nearby.

The dirt tanks are all nestled in low spots in the drainages and so are not easily discernable. All are old and overgrown with native vegetation, and none appear to be functional for long-term storage of runoff. Achenback Tank is located in the upper part of Achenback Canyon and only visible from a 40-acre area of the canyon and adjacent hills. The dam is breached and the pond is silted in. It would require reconstruction with hand tools or with outdated tools and draft horses as there is no access for motor vehicles or heavy equipment into the upper canyon. The remaining dirt tanks are all small, with the two in Section 25 being less than 1/4 acre each, and the tank in Section 36 being less than 1/2 acre. The small tanks in Section 25 are not on a main drainage channel, and have only about a 40-acre watershed slope above them. They probably hold a small amount of water for a few weeks during the rainy season. The tank in Section 36 is in need of maintenance as the dike is breaching and the pit is silting in. The rock tank used to feed a concrete trough through a steel pipe, but the tank is completely silted in and the pipe is gone.

Approximately 1.1 miles of the vehicle ways provide vehicular access to the dirt tanks, while the remaining 1.5 miles provide a means for recreational users to get closer to the mountains than the road allows.

The entire **WSA** appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. The few developments are not substantially noticeable in the area as a whole.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE

The entire **WSA** is dissected by a series of small, narrow, rocky canyons interspersed by high, steep, rocky ridges. Woody vegetation in the canyon bottoms and rock outcrops on the hillsides compliment the topographic screening of the canyons and ridges, creating a multitude of possibilities for isolating individuals and groups from one another. Visitation to the area is slight, and despite the proximity of major population centers, the area seems very remote. The topography and location of the area allow it to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION

The **WSA** provides opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation including hiking, camping, backpacking, hunting, sightseeing, photography, and wildlife observation. The area provides some of the best quail and rabbit hunting in Dona Ana County, and when deer-entry hunts are held by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, some of the biggest mule deer in southern New Mexico are taken from this area. The diversity and quality of these primitive and unconfined types of recreation are outstanding.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES

The **WSA** contains both ecological and cultural features of scientific, educational, scenic, and historic value. Many of the canyons contain seasonal springs, some of which provide water nearly yearlong. These springs create habitat for plants and animals that is extremely important in a desert environment. Several plants listed as endangered by the State of New Mexico occur in the area, some of which are under review for Federal listing as threatened or endangered species.

Archaeological sites in the **WSA** include midden rings and the famous Peña Blanca rockshelters. The Peña Blanca rock shelters were professionally excavated by New Mexico State University in the 1980's and have provided the earliest known cultivated corn in the United States, a primitive variety with eight rows of kernels. Other significant information has been gathered from this site, but other sites in the inventory unit have not been inventoried, recorded, or excavated.

The scenic values of this portion of the Organ Mountains are also outstanding. While the red rhyolitic rocks do not equal the quartz monzonite spires of the Organ Needles, the scenery is spectacular. The inventory unit contains canyons of angular blocky rock outcrops arranged in pyramidal patterns, with other canyons containing ribbons of green oak trees between red rhyolite cliffs, or bands of mountain mahogany nestled deep in vertical crevices between white ridges of volcanic tuff. During the summer growing season, the hills are washed in a bright green hue from the thick carpet of grasses.

POSSIBILITY OF RECLAIMING HUMAN IMPACTS

The vehicle ways could all be revegetated through successful vehicle closure. The dirt tanks are currently not functional, and unless they are rebuilt, will not require vehicular access by the grazing permittee. They are currently revegetated and will continue to assume a more natural appearance over time.

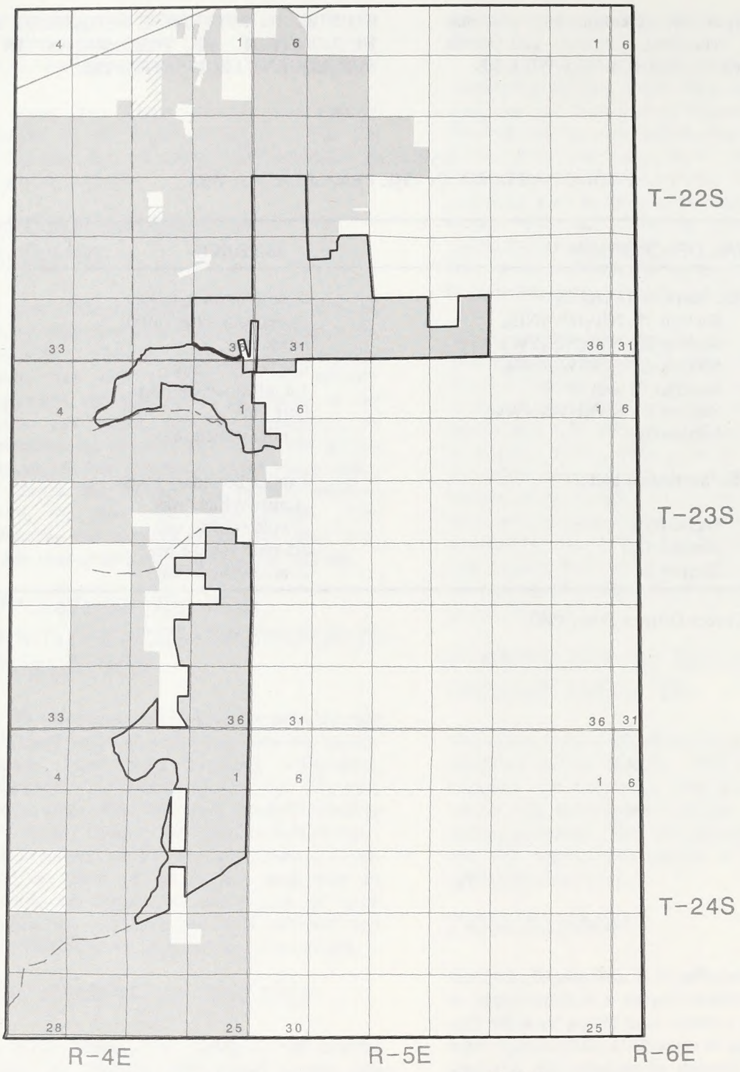
CONCLUSION

The Peña Blanca **WSA** is of sufficient size to allow its preservation in a natural condition. A 4,441-acre block of public land appears to be natural, with approximately 1,080 acres of adjacent private land also appearing to be natural. The private land has been identified for acquisition through the Southern Rio Grande Plan Amendment and the Organ Mountains Coordinated Resource Management Plan. Acquisition of this private land would result in a 5,521-acre unit. There are no private or State trust inholdings. The area offers outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation and also has supplemental ecological, cultural, and scenic values. **THE PEÑA BLANCA WSA WILL BE STUDIED TO DETERMINE SUITABILITY FOR DESIGNATION AS WILDERNESS IN A SUBSEQUENT LEGISLATIVE EIS.**

TABLE I-1
HUMAN IMPRINTS IN THE PEÑA BLANCA WSA

LEGAL DESCRIPTION	IMPRINTS
T. 22 S., R. 3 E., Sections 13 and 24	.5 mile interior fences
Section 25, NE¼NW¼NE¼	Achenback tank (dirt)
Section 25, NW¼NE¼SW¼	Rock tank
Section 25, SE¼SW¼NW¼	2 small dirt tanks
Sections 25 and 26	1.4 miles vehicle ways
Section 36, SW¼NW¼NW¼	Dirt tank
Section 36	.1 mile vehicle way
T. 23 S., R. 3 E., Sections 1 and 2	2 miles boundary fence
	.4 mile vehicle way
Section 11	.2 mile vehicle way
Section 13	.05 mile vehicle way
Section 14	.5 mile vehicle way

Source: Las Cruces District Files, 1992.


4
1
6
1
6
T-22S
33
36
31
36
31
4
1
6
1
6
T-23S
33
36
31
36
31
4
1
6
1
6
T-24S
28
25
30
25
R-4E
R-5E
R-6E

ORGAN NEEDLES and PENA BLANCA

WILDERNESS STUDY AREA PROPOSED PLAN

SCALE 1: 75000

N

3.1 0 MILE 3.1

3.1 0 3.1 KILOMETER

Legend

WSA BOUNDARY ―
PUBLIC LAND ▩
STATE LAND ▨
OTHER LANDS ☐
COUNTY ROAD ----

APPENDIX I-2
WILDERNESS INVENTORY REPORT
ORGAN NEEDLES

INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) exchanged lands to the State of New Mexico for lands in the Organ Mountains in 1986 and 1988. An additional exchange with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in 1988 added land to the contiguous public land in the Organ Mountains. Additional acreage was acquired in an exchange with New Mexico State University in 1991. The land acquired by the BLM plus adjacent public land had not all been included in the initial inventory for wilderness suitability that was conducted in the Las Cruces District during 1979. Sections 201 and 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) provide for ongoing inventories of public land resources and identification of significant areas through the Resource Management Plan (RMP) process.

Acquisition of State trust and private lands in the Organ Mountains has created a block of 7,604 acres of public land in the vicinity of the Organ Needles in the central portion of the Organ Mountains. This report evaluates the wilderness values of the area.

SIZE

The Organ Needles **WSA** contains 7,604 acres of public land. The area meets the size requirements of the Wilderness Act of 1964 by having "...at least 5,000 acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition." The **WSA** is bounded on the east by the Fort Bliss Military Reservation and the White Sands Missile Range, on the south by Fort Bliss and private land, on the west by roads, and on the north end by private land and the 7,283-acre Organ Mountains **WSA**.

NATURALNESS

Human imprints are substantially unnoticeable throughout the **WSA**, with the imprints consisting of livestock developments such as fences and developed springs. A summary of the imprints of man's work in the area is shown in Table I-2.

The trails listed in Table I-2 include a portion of the Baylor Pass National Recreation Trail, most of the Pine Tree National Recreation Trail, and the Crawford Trail. These trails do not significantly detract from the naturalness of the area and would be in conformance with wilderness management guidelines. The road/trail is the Dripping Springs Trail which is maintained as a service road.

The fences are constructed of barbed wire and wood posts that are not visible except from nearby. One of the fences is in need of repair and is nonfunctional in its current condition.

The developed spring and the rock dam are both nestled in small, steep canyons that effectively screen them from view except for the immediate vicinities. Riparian vegetation further hides them from view.

The entire **WSA** appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. The few developments are not substantially noticeable in the area as a whole.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE

The **WSA** contains the rugged, scenic, high spires of the mountains and is dissected by a series of small, narrow, rocky canyons interspersed by high, steep, rocky ridges. Woody vegetation in the canyon bottoms and rock outcrops on the hillsides compliment the topographic screening of the peaks, canyons, and ridges creating a multitude of possibilities for isolating individuals and groups from one another. Visitation to the area is heavy, particularly in the spring and fall, but is concentrated on the developed trails and despite the proximity of major population centers, users in the area feel very isolated. The topography and location of the area allow it to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION

The **WSA** provides opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation including hiking, rock climbing, camping, backpacking, hunting, sightseeing, photography, and wildlife observation. The Organ Needles are world reknowned for their technical rock climbing opportunities, which have hundreds of mapped routes to the tops. Sugarloaf Peak is also well known by climbers. The quartz monzonite of the Needles and the Sugarloaf area is an extremely stable rock that provides excellent support desired for anchoring technical equipment. The area provides some of the best quail and rabbit hunting in Dona Ana County, and when deer-entry hunts are held by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, some of the biggest mule deer in southern New Mexico are taken from this area. The diversity and quality of these primitive and unconfined types of recreation are outstanding. Several plants and animals occur in the area that are found nowhere else, and are easy to observe and photograph.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES

The **WSA** contains ecological and cultural features of scientific, educational, scenic, and historic value. Many of the canyons contain seasonal springs, some of which provide water nearly yearlong. These springs create habitat for plants and animals that is extremely important in a desert environment. Several plants listed as endangered by the State of New Mexico occur in the area, some of which are under review for Federal listing as threatened or endangered species. The State-listed Organ Mountains chipmunk occurs through most of the area.

Archeological sites in the **WSA** include the famous La Cueva rockshelter and the historic Modoc mine millsite and Van Patten Mountain Camp. La Cueva rockshelter was professionally excavated by the University of Texas at El Paso in the 1970's and has provided a significant number of artifacts and data on prehistoric cultures that have inhabited the cave for over 7,000 years. Other sites in the **WSA** have not been inventoried recorded or excavated.

The scenic values of this portion of the Organ Mountains are also outstanding. The quartz monzonite spires of the Organ Needles provide the most spectacular scenery in southern New Mexico, a view that the 60,000 inhabitants of Las Cruces relish daily, and local merchants constantly capitalize on in advertising. A 9,000-acre portion of the Organs including much of this unit has been designated as a Scenic Area of Critical Environmental Concern. The inventory unit contains massive spires of almost barren rock cleft with narrow chasms containing ribbons of green oak trees, with huge boulders along the flanks and alluvial fans. During the summer growing season, the hills are washed in a bright green hue from the thick carpet of grasses.

POSSIBILITY OF RECLAIMING HUMAN IMPACTS

There are no human impacts in the **WSA** that would need reclamation to enable management as wilderness, and in fact it would violate the Antiquities Act and Archeological Resources Protection Act to disturb most of the human imprints in the area.

CONCLUSION

The Organ Needles **WSA** is of sufficient size to allow its preservation in a natural condition. A 7,604-acre block of public land was inventoried, which appears to be natural. There are no private or State trust inholdings, although a patented mining claim and the access road to it have been excluded from the unit. The area offers outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation and also has supplemental ecological, cultural, and scenic values. **THE ORGAN NEEDLES WSA WILL BE STUDIED TO DETERMINE SUITABILITY FOR DESIGNATION AS WILDERNESS IN A SUBSEQUENT LEGISLATIVE EIS.**

TABLE I-2
HUMAN IMPRINTS IN THE ORGAN NEEDLES WSA

LEGAL DESCRIPTION	IMPRINTS
T. 22 S., R.3 E., Section 36, SE¼SE¼NW¼	Developed Spring
T. 22 S., R.4 E., Section 19	1.5 miles hiking trail
Section 29	1 mile hiking trail
Section 30	.5 mile hiking trail
Section 31	.5 mile hiking trail
Section 32	1 mile hiking trail
T. 23 S., R.3 E., Section 1, NE¼SW¼NE¼	Historic homestead
Section 1, SW¼SW¼NE¼	Historic mine millsite
Section 1	1.5 miles trail
Section 1	.5 mile fence
Section 2	1 mile vehicle way
Section 12, NE¼NE¼	.25 mile trail
Section 12, NE¼NE¼NE¼	Crawford homestead
Section 12	.75 mile road/trail
T. 23 S., R.4 E., Section 7, SE¼SE¼NW¼	Van Patten Mountain Camp
Section 7, NW¼NE¼SW¼	Boyd Sanatorium
Section 7, NE¼NE¼SW¼	Rock tank
Section 7	.5 mile road/trail
Section 7	.3 mile fence

Source: Las Cruces District Files, 1992.

APPENDIX I-3
WILDERNESS INVENTORY REPORT
GRAY PEAK

INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) exchanged lands to Joe Jackson in 1989 and to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in 1990 for lands in the Peloncillo Mountains in southern Hidalgo County. The lands acquired by the BLM were not included in the 1979 initial inventory for wilderness suitability, and contiguous land did not make the initial inventory cut because the land was in isolated parcels of less than 5,000 acres. Sections 201 and 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) direct the BLM to conduct ongoing inventories of public land resources and identification of significant areas through the Resource Management Plan (RMP) process.

Acquisition of private land in the Peloncillo Mountains between Antelope Pass and Post Office Canyon has created a block of **17,400** acres of public land. This report evaluates the wilderness values of the area.

SIZE

The Gray Peak **WSA** contained **17,400** acres of public land. Roads running north and south through the eastern portion of the area leave a **14,678**-acre contiguous **WSA**. The area meets the size requirements of the Wilderness Act of 1964 by having at least 5,000 acres of land. The area is large enough to be effectively preserved in a natural condition. The **WSA** is bounded on the north, west, and south by private and State trust lands, and on the east by roads and private and State trust lands. **ACREAGE CHANGES FROM THE DRAFT RMP/EIS WERE TO DELETE PRIVATE LAND THAT WAS INADVERTENTLY INCLUDED IN THE INITIAL INVENTORY.**

NATURALNESS

Human imprints are substantially unnoticeable throughout the **WSA**. Imprints are primarily livestock developments, with roads leading to some of the developments. Roads leading to some of these developments have excluded 2,722 acres of the contiguous public land from the **WSA**. Table I-3 lists imprints of man's work within the **WSA**.

Most of the livestock fences are old wood and barbed wire fences that are not visible except from nearby. Some of the fences are abandoned and consist only of scattered wood posts with occasional strands of barbed wire. **THE BLM HAS RECENTLY CONSTRUCTED** approximately 3 miles of new fence in the vicinity of Owl Canyon to benefit desert bighorn sheep.

The dirt tanks and concrete dams are all set in vegetated drainage bottoms where brush or trees obscure visibility of the structures from most directions. The concrete dams support seasonal to perennial ponds and adjacent riparian vegetation that makes these structures blend extremely well with the natural environment. The roads lead to livestock developments such as a well, a developed spring, storage tanks, and dirt tanks. The roads that are listed in the table have actually been excluded from the unit by drawing the boundary around them (cherry-stemmed), but they are listed to show that human developments in the unit do not dominate the landscape. None of the man-made structures cover more than a quarter acre, and the cumulative total of these developments is less than .1 percent of the **WSA**.

The entire **WSA** appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, and the developments are not substantially noticeable in the area as a whole. The unit exhibits an extremely high degree of naturalness, and the landscape and biota reflect a lack of human manipulation.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE

The **WSA** consists of the most rugged and remote portion of the Peloncillo Mountains. The **WSA** includes a major mountain ridgeline that is 11 miles long with five major peaks along it and dozens of smaller hills and ridges, all separated by canyons ranging from a few hundred yards to almost a mile across. Oak, pinyon pine, and juniper trees on the higher hills provide an excellent opportunity for vegetation screening that compliments the topographic screening of the area, providing innumerable possibilities for isolating groups and individuals from each other. Visitation to the area is extremely low because of the distance from major population centers and the closure of the area to deer and javelina hunting, which are the two dominant uses of public land in the area. All these factors combine to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION

The **WSA** provides opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation including hiking, camping, backpacking, hunting, photography, and wildlife observation. The area supports several species of animals and plants that are not found in other parts of New Mexico, and so provides opportunities for viewing wildlife that are otherwise unavailable. The area provides some of the best hunting in New Mexico for feral pigs. The area is currently closed to deer and javelina hunting, but if it is opened some day could provide excellent opportunities for hunting both of these species. The area also supports a small herd of desert bighorn sheep, **WHICH COULD PROVIDE A UNIQUE HUNTING OPPORTUNITY.**

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES

The **WSA** contains ecological and cultural features of scientific, educational, scenic, and historic values. Many of the canyons contain seasonal springs that are important sources of water for wildlife and plants in a desert climate. Rare fauna known from the area includes the Mexican long-tongued bat, the coati, **DESERT BIGHORN,** and the State endangered green rat snake. TNC lists over 30 State sensitive plant species from this area including the Federal Candidate night-blooming *Cereus greggii*. This portion of the Peloncillo Mountains supports one of the most extensive and well-developed examples of Madrean evergreen woodland in New Mexico. Vegetation is characterized by many Mexican species of oaks and the Mexican pinyon pine (*Pinus cembroides*). No formal archaeological surveys have been conducted, but caves in the area show evidence of prehistoric use, and some sites show great potential for significant cultural deposits. The area provides opportunities for scientific study of wildlife that are not found in other mountain ranges in New Mexico including both Sonoran desert and Mexican highlands species.

The scenic values of this portion of the Peloncillo Mountains are outstanding. The western escarpment overlooks Rodeo and the San Simon Valley, and provides a spectacular vista from the Chiricahua Mountains including the Chiricahua Wilderness and U.S. Highway 80. On the eastern side, the **WSA** is not visible until the hills are entered, but the eastern side including areas like King Mountain, which consists of sculpted volcanic tuffs supporting dense stands of oak trees in crevices, include some of the most scenic mountains in the Mimbres Resource Area. Gray Peak at the north end of the unit is the largest and most spectacular mountain along State Road 9.

POSSIBILITY OF RECLAIMING HUMAN IMPACTS

The existing developments comprise such a miniscule portion of the area as to preclude any need for reclamation. The existing roads to livestock developments have been excluded from the unit by boundary adjustments. Two old roads through the area have been naturally reclaimed by shifting of alluvial material that has reestablished natural topography and vegetation. No roads or vehicle ways requiring reclamation exist within the **WSA** since the roads were excluded from the **WSA**.

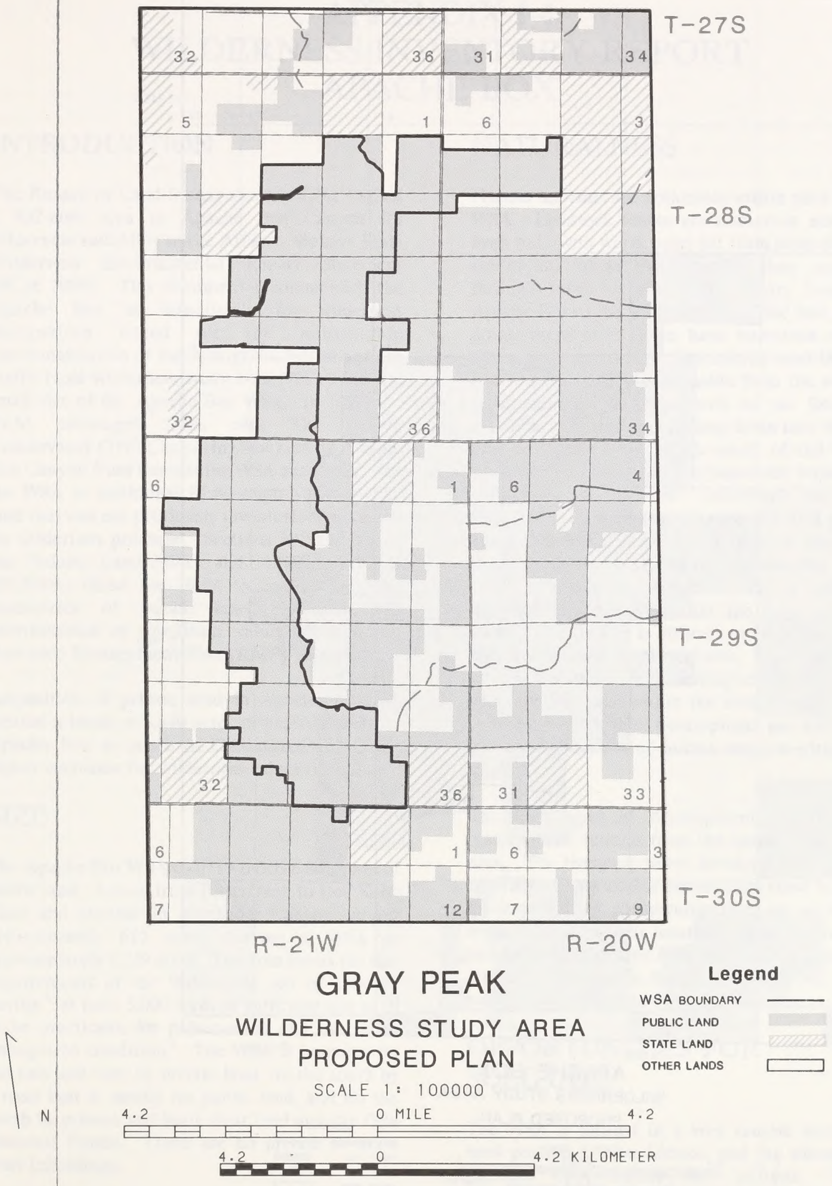
CONCLUSION

The Gray Peak **WSA** is of sufficient size to allow its preservation in a natural condition. There are no private or State trust inholdings. A 15,878-acre roadless area exists which appears to be natural and offers outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation including hunting, hiking, backpacking, photography, and wildlife viewing. The area also contains supplemental values including cultural resources, scenic values, and endangered species. **THE GRAY PEAK WSA WILL BE STUDIED TO DETERMINE WILDERNESS SUITABILITY IN A SUBSEQUENT LEGISLATIVE EIS.**

TABLE I-3
HUMAN IMPRINTS IN THE GRAY PEAK WSA

LEGAL DESCRIPTION	IMPRINTS
T. 28 S., R. 20 W., Section 7	2 miles fence
Section 8	1 mile fence
Section 18, SE¼NW¼NW¼	Wildlife water catchment
T. 28 S., R. 21 W., Section 10	.25 mile road
Section 10, NW¼SW¼SE¼	Water tank
Section 11	1.25 miles fence
Section 11, NE¼SE¼SW¼	Dirt tank
Section 11, SE¼NE¼SW¼	Dirt tank
Section 12	.75 mile fence
Section 13, NW¼NW¼NW¼	Wildlife water catchment
Section 14	1.2 miles fence
Section 15	.5 mile road
Section 15	1.2 miles fence
Section 21	.5 mile road
Section 22, NE¼NE¼NW¼	Dirt tank
Section 22, SW¼SW¼NW¼	Dirt tank
Section 22, SE¼SW¼NW¼	Well
Section 22	.5 mile road
Section 26, SE¼SE¼SE¼	Cement dam
Section 27	1.7 miles fence
Section 28	.75 mile road
Section 28, SW¼SE¼NE¼	Developed spring
Section 33	.25 mile road
Section 33, SW¼SW¼NW¼	Storage tank
T. 29 S., R. 21 W., Section 3, SW¼NW¼SW¼	Dirt tank
Section 4, NW¼SW¼NW¼	Wildlife water catchment
Section 16, NW¼SW¼SE¼	Dirt tank
Section 16, SW¼SW¼NW¼	Wildlife water catchment
Section 16, NW¼SE¼SW¼	Cement dam
Section 16, NW¼SW¼SE¼	Cement dam
Section 21, SW¼SE¼NE¼	Cement dam
Section 21, NE¼NE¼SE¼	Storage tank
Section 22	.6 mile pipeline
Section 27, NE¼NW¼SW¼	Dirt tank
Section 27, SW¼SE¼NE¼	Corrals
Section 27, SW¼NE¼SW¼	Cement dam
Section 35	1.1 mile road
T. 30 S., R. 21 W., Section 3, NW¼NE¼NE¼	Dirt tank
Section 3	.1 mile road

Source: Las Cruces District Files, 1992.


T-27S
T-28S
T-29S
T-30S
R-21W
R-20W
32
36
31
34
5
1
6
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32
36
34
6
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6
4
32
36
31
33
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3
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4.2 KILOMETER

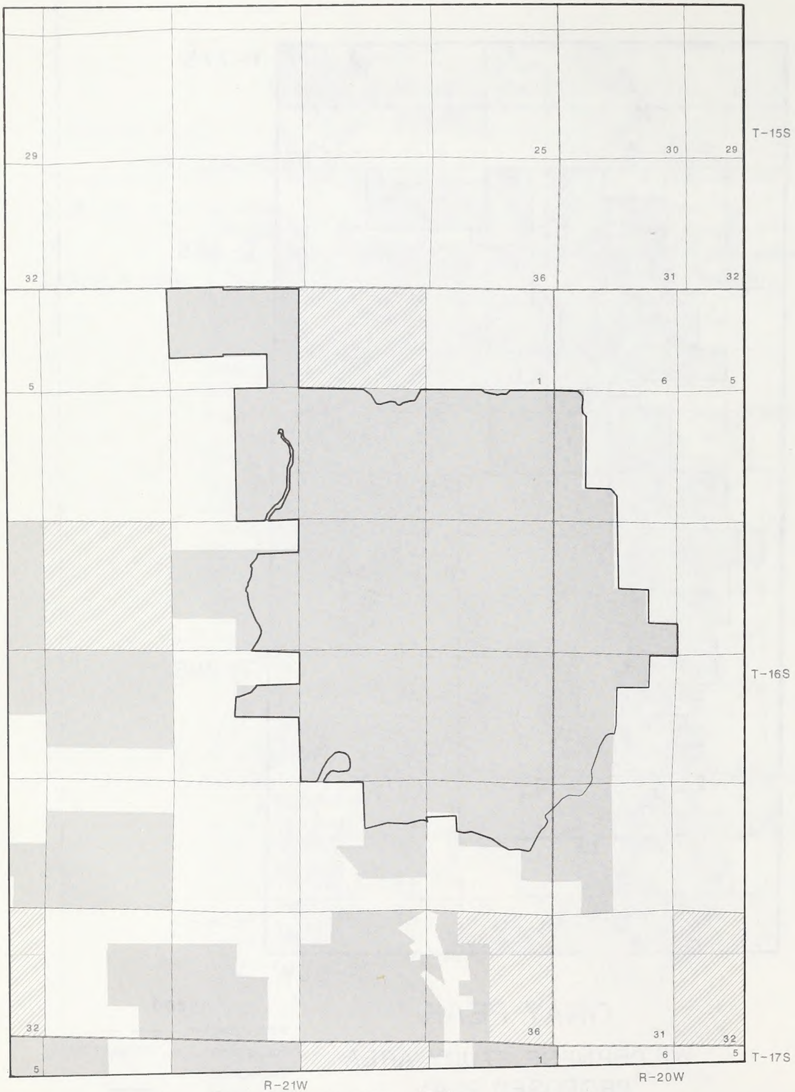
GRAY PEAK

WILDERNESS STUDY AREA PROPOSED PLAN

SCALE 1: 100000

Legend

WSA BOUNDARY —
PUBLIC LAND ▩
STATE LAND ▨
OTHER LANDS ☐


T-15S
T-16S
T-17S
R-21W
R-20W
29
25
30
29
32
36
31
32
5
1
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5
32
36
31
32
5
1
6
5

APACHE BOX
WILDERNESS STUDY AREA
PROPOSED PLAN

SCALE 1: 75000
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3.1
3.1
0
3.1 KILOMETER

Legend

- WSA BOUNDARY ―
- PUBLIC LAND ▒
- STATE LAND ▨
- OTHER LANDS ☐

APPENDIX I-4
WILDERNESS INVENTORY REPORT
APACHE BOX

INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) studied a 932-acre area in Apache Box Canyon for wilderness suitability in the Arizona Mohave Final Wilderness Environmental Impact Statement (BLM 1989). This document recommended the Apache Box as nonsuitable for wilderness designation based on the nonsuitable recommendation of the contiguous Forest Service Hell's Hole wilderness study area (**WSA**) and the small size of the Apache Box **WSA**. In 1990, the BLM exchanged lands with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), acquiring new land up Apache Box Canyon from the existing **WSA** and connecting the **WSA** to additional BLM-administered public land that was not previously inventoried or studied for wilderness potential. Sections 201 and 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) direct the BLM to conduct ongoing inventories of public land resources and identification of significant values through the Resource Management Plan (RMP) process.

Acquisition of private land in Apache Box has created a block of 6,840 acres of public land from Apache Box to south of Crookson Peak. This report evaluates the wilderness values of the area.

SIZE

The Apache Box **WSA CONTAINED** 6,840 acres of public land. A road from Bittercreek to Red Kelly Tank and another in Alexander Canyon cut off approximately 611 acres, leaving a **WSA** of approximately 6,229 acres. The area meets the size requirements of the Wilderness Act of 1964 by having "..at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition." The **WSA** is bounded on the east and west by private land, on the south by a road that is mostly on public land, and on the north by private and State trust land and the Gila National Forest. There are no private or State trust inholdings.

NATURALNESS

Human imprints are noticeable within parts of the **WSA**. Livestock fences are numerous and have been built with wood posts cut from juniper trees. Additional illegal woodcutting has occurred through much of the high country from the Apache Box to the southern end of the unit, to the point where most ridges have numerous stumps where trees once were. The mining road into the Box is a scar that is discernable from the western escarpment for 2 miles south of the Box, and switchbacks of this road leading down into the Box plus drill pads at the saddle south of and within the lower portion of the Box negatively impact the naturalness of 2 acres. Although the total disturbed area including the road and drill pads is approximately 2 acres, these impacts draw the attention of observers over a considerably larger area (160 acres). Approximately 9 miles of livestock fences exist within the area, and are located such that it is difficult to be more than 1 mile from a fence within the area. Eight rock, dirt, or concrete tanks, four developed springs, and a windmill also exist within the area, averaging out to one livestock water development per 482 acres. Table I-4 lists existing human impacts within the **WSA**.

The high level of development for livestock management detracts from the naturalness of the area. The livestock water developments are not substantially noticeable except from close by. The fences are often conspicuous from up to ½ mile away because of their locations on ridges and the lack of trees that have been cut down to build the fences. The Apache Box Canyon appears to be natural except for the mining development.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLITUDE

The **WSA** is located in a very remote and little used portion of New Mexico, and the whole area provides opportunities for solitude. The mountainous terrain and numerous small canyons provide excellent opportunities for solitude. The steep, narrow Apache Box Canyon is strewn with large to immense boulders, making travel through the canyon extremely arduous. The difficulty of traversing the canyon coupled with the roar of the rushing stream make the canyon bottom one of the best places in southwestern New Mexico to experience solitude.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION

The **WSA** provides opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation including hiking, hunting, camping, photography, and wildlife observation. The diversity and quality of these recreation opportunities in the Apache Box Canyon are exceptional, primarily because of the beauty of the riparian area and extremely enriched diversity of plants and animals supported by the stream. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation throughout the remainder of the area are not outstanding compared to the same types of recreation on surrounding public and Forest Service lands.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES

The **WSA** contains both ecological and cultural features of scientific, educational, scenic, and historic values. The perennial water course in Apache Box Canyon supports a nearly pristine riparian area that is home to an extremely diverse flora including eight oak species, one of which (Palmer oak) is considered globally rare (Dunmire 1990). The riparian community further supports both Federally endangered and State endangered species. Several caves show evidence of prehistoric habitation but have not been recorded. A Mogollon rockshelter and an historic house mound, road, and sheep pen have been recorded in the unit. Neither of the recorded sites appear to qualify for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

POSSIBILITY OF RECLAIMING HUMAN IMPACTS

The livestock developments are fairly noticeable throughout much of the area but will become substantially less noticeable as trees are reestablished on hills and ridges where they have been cut for fence posts and firewood. The road to the drill pads in Apache Box could easily be reclaimed by natural shifting of the talus on the slope in which it was cut. Likewise, the drill pads in Apache Box Canyon could naturally reclaim themselves over time through alluvial and colluvial deposition of soil and rock, and revegetation of the natural plant community. The drill pad at the saddle south of the Box Canyon would require some earthwork to approximate natural contours. The quarry is no longer in use and is being naturally revegetated. Vehicle ways would revegetate substantially with limited use.

CONCLUSION

The Apache Box **WSA** is of sufficient size to allow its preservation in an unimpaired condition. A 6,227-acre block of public land is roadless, but naturalness is variable throughout the area. The Apache Box Canyon is highly natural except for 2 acres of roads and drill pads. The remainder of the area does not have significant surface disturbance, but livestock developments are numerous and in some instances fairly noticeable because of a long-term trend of wood cutting for fence posts and firewood. Many of the hills and ridges look fairly heavily cut over, with abundant stumps and few live trees. The area provides outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined types of recreation and also has supplemental ecological, scenic, and cultural values, particularly within the Box Canyon. **THE APACHE BOX WSA WILL BE STUDIED TO DETERMINE SUITABILITY FOR DESIGNATION AS WILDERNESS IN A SUBSEQUENT LEGISLATIVE EIS.**

TABLE I-4
HUMAN IMPRINTS IN THE APACHE BOX WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

LEGAL DESCRIPTION	IMPRINTS
T. 16 S., R. 20 W., Section 8, NE¼NW¼SW¼	Dirt Tank
Section 18	.5 mile boundary fence
Section 19	.5 mile vehicle way
T. 16 S., R. 21 W., Section 3	.5 mile fence
Section 3, NW¼NW¼NW¼	Smith Well
Section 3, SW¼NW¼SW¼	Dirt tank
Section 3, NW¼SE¼SE¼	2 masonry dams
Section 10, SE¼NE¼NE¼	2.5 acre drill pads
Section 10	1 mile road
Section 11, SW¼SW¼SE¼	Dirt tank
Section 12, NE¼NW¼NW¼	Cabin and corrals
Section 12, SW¼SE¼SW¼	Masonry dam
Section 13, SE¼NE¼NE¼	Dirt tank
Section 13, SE¼SW¼SW¼	Apache Reservoir
Section 13	1.3 miles boundary fences
Section 13	.2 mile vehicle way
Section 14, NW¼SW¼SW¼	Fish spring (developed)
Section 14, SE¼SW¼SW¼	Indian Spring (developed)
Section 14	2 miles boundary fences
Section 22, SW¼SE¼NE¼	Developed spring
Section 23, NE¼NW¼NW¼	McNaire Spring (developed)
Section 23, SE¼SW¼	Rock quarry
Section 23	2 miles boundary fences
Section 23	.5 mile road
Section 24, SE¼NW¼SE¼	Cherry Reservoir
Section 24	1.2 miles vehicle way
Section 24	.8 mile interior fence
Section 25	.5 mile interior fence

Source: Las Cruces District Files, 1992.

APPENDIX J
GILA RIVER WILD AND SCENIC RIVER INVENTORY REPORT SUMMARY

USDI HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE 1980

This inventory **COVERED** the **GILA RIVER** from the San Carlos Indian Reservation in Arizona upstream to the confluence of the east and west forks **IN NEW MEXICO.** The inventory determined that the river is free-flowing but varies from pristine to broad sandy floodplains traversing low rolling terrain with agricultural development.

USDI NATIONAL PARK SERVICE 1982

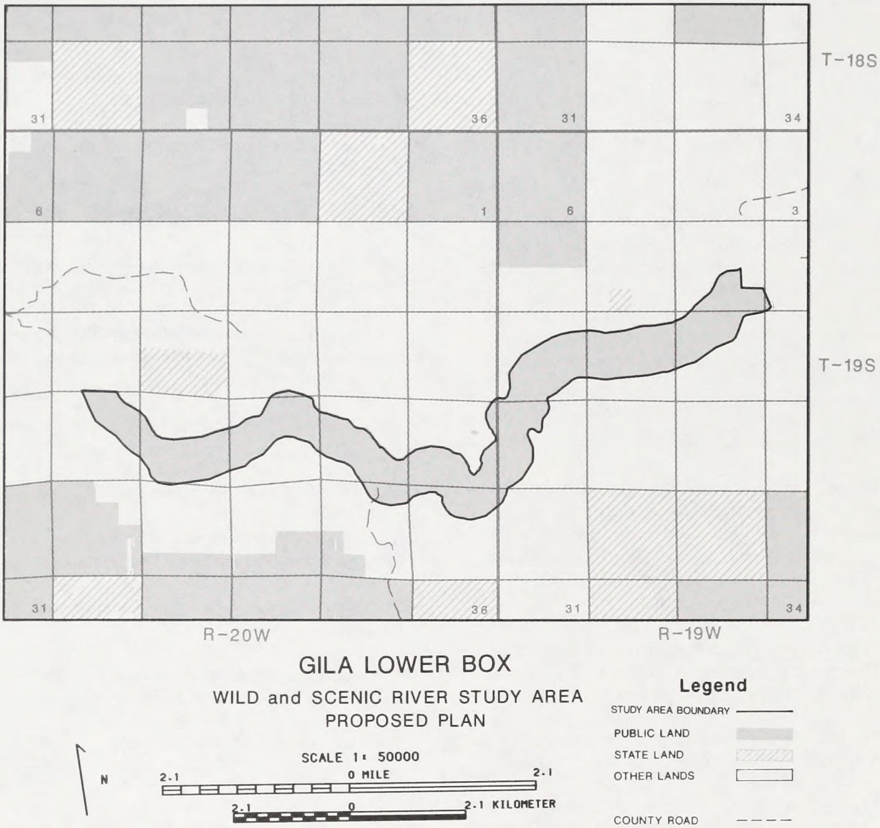
This inventory found that the segment from San Carlos Reservoir in Arizona upstream to the confluence of the east and west forks of the Gila River contained outstandingly remarkable scenic, geologic, fish, wildlife, and cultural values. The narrative description states that:

- Three areas in New Mexico have been identified as important fish habitat by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- The Gila is recommended as a component of the New Mexico Rivers System.
- The Redrock Cliffs area has been identified as significant in the New Mexico Natural Areas Inventory.
- The river valley is important habitat for a variety of State-listed endangered species.
- The segment has the richest riparian avifauna in New Mexico.

AMERICAN RIVERS 1988

This inventory determined that the segment within the Mimbres Resource Area has been identified as containing outstandingly remarkable values. The report did not list outstandingly remarkable values but listed agencies that have identified outstanding values including:

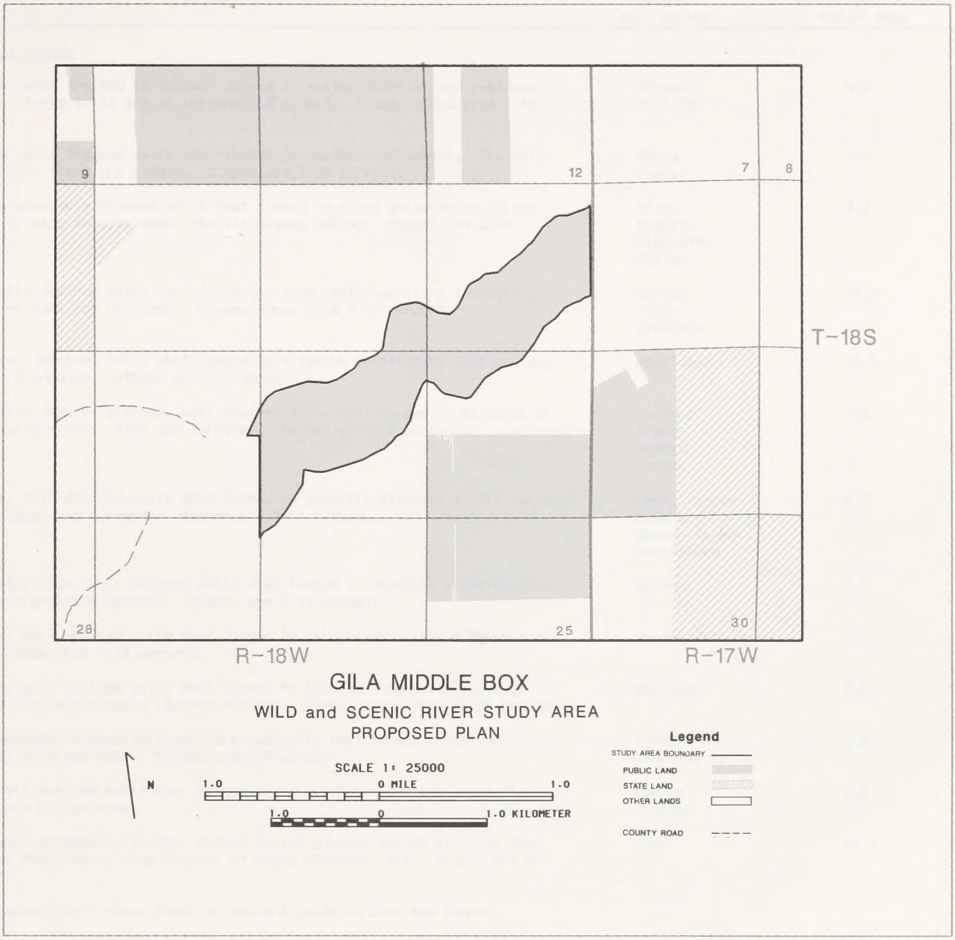
- The National Park Service Nationwide Rivers Inventory.
- The Bureau of Land Management.
- The Nature Conservancy list of Priority Aquatic Sites for Biological Diversity Conservation.
- The New Mexico State Parks and Recreation Division.
- The American Whitewater Affiliation's list of outstanding whitewater streams.
- The Bureau of Outdoor Recreation.



T-18S
T-19S
R-20W
R-19W
31
36
31
34
6
1
6
3
31
36
31
34
N
SCALE 1: 50000
2.1
0 MILE
2.1
2.1
0
2.1 KILOMETER
Legend
STUDY AREA BOUNDARY
PUBLIC LAND
STATE LAND
OTHER LANDS
COUNTY ROAD

GILA LOWER BOX

WILD and SCENIC RIVER STUDY AREA
PROPOSED PLAN



GILA MIDDLE BOX
WILD and SCENIC RIVER STUDY AREA
PROPOSED PLAN

9
12
7
8
T-18S
28
25
30
R-18W
R-17W
N
SCALE 1: 25000
1.0
0 MILE
1.0
1.0
0
1.0 KILOMETER
Legend
STUDY AREA BOUNDARY
PUBLIC LAND
STATE LAND
OTHER LANDS
COUNTY ROAD

APPENDIX K
MAJOR SOIL TYPES IN THE MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

SOIL TYPE	MAJOR SOIL SERIES	APPROXIMATE PERCENT SURVEY AREA
Dona Ana County		
Shallow, well drained soils that formed in eolian material and residuum of basalt. These soils are on uplands and slopes. Slopes range from 1-15 percent.	Aftaden Minlith	5.2
Shallow, well drained soils that formed in residuum of basalt. The soils are on lava flows and ridges. Slopes are 3-25 percent.	Akela Lozier	4.4
Deep, excessively drained soils that formed in mixed alluvium on valley floors of wide arroyos above the Rio Grande Valley. Slopes are 0-40 percent.	Arizo Canutio Bluepoint Caliza	9.2
Deep, well drained soils that formed in mixed alluvium along mountain fronts on fans and terraces. Slopes range from 2-10 percent.	Berino Onite Pinaleno	14.2
Deep, well drained soils that formed in alluvium modified by wind on fans and fan piedmonts. Slopes are 1-5 percent.	Bucklebar	14.2
Moderately deep to shallow, well drained soils that formed in alluvium on level basin floors, fans and terraces. Slopes are 0-3 percent.	Cacique Cruces Casito Terino	3.3
Shallow, well drained soils that formed in gravelly alluvium in old valley fill, ridges and terraces. Slopes are 1-15 percent.	Cave, Tencee Simona Upton, Nickel Harrisburg	6.7
Moderately deep, well drained soils that formed in gravelly alluvium over weathered granitic bedrock. Slopes are 5-15 percent.	Nolam	1.5
Shallow, well drained soils that formed in calcareous alluvium on uplands. Slopes range from 1-15 percent.	Masonfort	2.5
Shallow, well drained soils that formed in alluvium and colluvium that derived from mixed basic igneous bedrock. Slopes range from 13-75 percent.	Motoqua	3.0
Deep, somewhat excessively well drained soils that formed in eolian material on broad fans. Slopes are 1-3 percent.	Pintura Yturbide	2.8
Deep, well drained soils that formed in alluvium on fans and basin floors. Slopes are 0-1 percent.	Reagan Mimbres	2.6
Deep, well drained soils that formed in old unconsolidated alluvium that has been modified by wind and are on broad piedmont fans. Slopes are 0-1 percent.	Wink	16.4
Miscellaneous soil types found on non-BLM lands in Dona Ana County.		14
TOTAL		100%
Grant County		
Moderately deep, well drained soils formed in colluvium and residuum derived mainly from acidic igneous rock. They are on mountains, ridges, and hills and the slope is 3-45 percent.	Abrazo Luzena	20.1
Deep, excessively drained soils formed in alluvium derived from mixed sources. They are on floodplains and alluvial fans and the slope is 0-5 percent.	Arizo Mimbres	.8

APPENDIX K (Continued)
MAJOR SOIL TYPES IN THE MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

SOIL TYPE	MAJOR SOIL SERIES	APPROXIMATE PERCENT SURVEY AREA
Deep, well drained soils formed on alluvial fans and plains. Slopes are 1 - 5 percent.	Continental Bucklebar	6.8
Deep, excessively drained soils formed in alluvium derived from mixed sources. They are found on floodplains, stream channels, and alluvial fans. Slopes are 0-15 percent.	Ellicot Paymaster	1.9
Deep, well drained soils formed in old alluvium and eolian material derived from conglomerate. They are found on ridges and hills. Slopes are 1-35 percent.	Guy Lonti	11.6
Deep, moderate to well drained oils formed in alluvium derived from mixed sources. They are in bolsons and on flats. Slopes are 0 - 3 percent.	Hondale Verhalen	.8
Deep, well drained soils formed in residuum and old alluvium. They are found on hills and plains. Slopes is 2 - 15 percent.	Judd Manzano Tesajo	3.8
Deep, well drained soils formed in alluvium. They are found on alluvial plains and fans. Slope is 1 - 5 percent.	Mojave Stellar Verhalen	11.0
Deep, well drained soils formed in calcareous alluvium derived from mixed sources. They are found on alluvial fans, side slopes, and piedmonts. Slope is 2 - 15 percent.	Nickel	3.5
Deep, well drained soils formed in calcareous alluvium. They are found on the sides of piedmonts, terraces, alluvial fans and foot slopes. Slopes are 0 - 8 percent.	Tres Hermanos	7.6
Miscellaneous soils found on non-BLM lands in Grant County.		32.1
TOTAL		100%
Hidalgo County		
Excessively to well drained soils formed in sediment from igneous rock. These soils are on alluvial fans and bottoms. Slopes are 0 - 9 percent.	Arizo Comoro Grabe, Glendale Whitlock	.8
Well drained soils formed in material from igneous rock. These soils are found on alluvial fans on uplands. Slope is 0 - 5 percent.	Berino, Forrest Mohave, Pintura Sonoita, Stellar	20.08
Well drained soils formed from material weathered from granite. These soils are found on hills and alluvial fans on uplands. Slope is 1 - 25 percent.	Chiricahua Hap	1.2
Well drained soils formed from mixed igneous rocks mainly rhyolite. These soils are found on old alluvial fans on uplands. Slope is 0 - 15 percent.	Cloverdale Eicks	2.4
Well drained soils formed from mixed igneous rocks. These soils are found on foot slopes of mountains, hills and alluvial fans. Slope is 1 - 60 percent.	Eba Lehmans	18.1
Well drained soils formed from mixed igneous rock. These soils are found on alluvial fans on uplands. Slope is 0 - 5 percent.	Frye, Gila Mimbres, Pinaleno	3.35
Well drained soil formed from weathered basalt bedrock. These soils are found on hills. Slope is 0 - 45 percent.	Graham	

MAJOR SOIL TYPES IN THE MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

SOIL TYPE	MAJOR SOIL SERIES	APPROXIMATE PERCENT SURVEY AREA
Well drained soils formed from igneous and sedimentary rock. These soils are found on alluvial fans on uplands. Slopes is 0 - 20 percent.	Jal, Karra Yana	3.35
Well drained soils formed from mixed igneous rock. These soils are found on alluvial fans and bottoms. Slopes is 0 - 3 percent.	Hawkeye Pima	.45
Well drained soils that formed from mixed igneous and sedimentary rock. These soils are found on broad alluvial fans. Slopes is 0 - 5 percent.	Hondale Maricopa Ubar, Vekol	6.8
Well drained soils that formed in old alluvium from basic igneous rock. These soils are found on alluvial fans on uplands and were deposited on older alluvium. Slope is 1 - 4 percent.	Keno	.3
Well drained soils that formed in gravelly old alluvium from mixed igneous rock. These soils are found on piedmont slopes. Slope is 0 - 60 percent.	Nickel Tres Hermanas Upton	14.95
Undrained basins consisting of clay and silty clay sediments that have been deposited by water. Slopes are 0 - 1 percent.	Playas	1.35
Well drained soils formed from mixed igneous and limestone rock. These soils are found on olds alluvial fans on uplands. Slope is 0 - 5 percent.	Terino Tuney	.15
Moderately well drained soils formed in fine textured alluvium. These soils are found in alluvium bottoms. Slope is 0 - 1 percent.	Verhalen	2.6
Excessively drained soils that formed in coarse textured alluvium. These soils are found on alluvial fans. Slope is 0 - 9 percent.	Yturbide	.95
Miscellaneous soils found on non-BLM lands in Hidalgo County.		23.17
TOTAL		100%
Luna County		
Deep somewhat excessively drained soils that formed in mixed material deposited on floodplains and alluvial fans. Slope is 0 - 10 percent.	Bluepoint Onite Verhalen	5.7
Deep well drained soils formed in mixed igneous or granitic rock. These soils are found on fans, foot slopes or around the base of mountains. Slope is 0 - 10 percent.	Eba Sonoita	4.0
Deep well drained soils formed in valley fill sediments derived from mixed igneous rock. These soils are found on intermountain valley floors. Slope is 0 - 3 percent.	Hondale	13.8
Shallow well drained soils that are residual soils formed over acid igneous rock. These soils are found on hills and lower mountain slopes. Slope is 0 - 25 percent.	Lehmans Graham Ledru Lozier	8.9
Deep well drained soils formed in mixed alluvium. These soils are found on floodplains, terraces, and alluvial fans. Slope is 0 - 5 percent.	Mimbres Harkey, Jal Maricopa	12.7
Deep well drained soils formed on old alluvial fans. They are found on alluvial fans. Slope is 0 - 5 percent.	Mojave Stellar, Berino	18.5

MAJOR SOIL TYPES IN THE MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

SOIL TYPE	MAJOR SOIL SERIES	APPROXIMATE PERCENT SURVEY AREA
Excessive to well drained soils formed in old alluvium sediments and sandy deposits that have been reworked by wind. Slope is 0 - 5 percent.	Pintura Berino, Simona Akela	12
Miscellaneous soils found on non-BLM lands in Luna County.		10.9
TOTAL		100%

Source: Soil Conservation Service Soil Surveys 1973, 1980, 1983.

APPENDIX L-1
THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES POTENTIALLY OCCURRING ON PUBLIC LAND IN THE MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA[a/]

Plant Persistence[b/]	Scientific Name	Common Name (Family)	Status[c/]	Occurrences in the Resource Area	Habitat
S	Acacia millefolia	None (Fabaceae)	SR	Found just north of the Mexican border in Guadalupe Canyon, Guadalupe Mountains.	Plants occur in populations of few individuals.
PF	Agastache verticillata	None (Lamiaceae)	SS	Collected in the Organ Mountains on the military reservations.	Mountainous regions at altitudes over 7,000 feet.
S	Apacheria chiricahuensis	Cliff bitterbrush (Crossosomataceae)	SS	Found in Chiricahua Mountains and Apache Box.	Occurs in cliff crevices of rhyolitic rock between 5,800 to 8,000 feet.
PF	Asclepias uncialis	Milkweed (Asclepiadaceae)	SR	Found near Silver City.	Occurs in pinyon-juniper stands.
AF	Aster blepharophyllus	Aster (Asteraceae)	C-2	Found on Las Playas Springs, Hidalgo County on private land.	Occurs on the margins of playas.
PF	Astragalus castetteri	Castetter's milk-vetch (Leguminosae)	SS	Found in San Andres Mountains on military and public lands.	Occurs among pinyon and juniper, on limestone, between 5,000 to 6,000 feet.
PF	Astragalus cobrensis var. maguirei	None (Fabaceae)	SS	Found in Guadalupe Pass, Guadalupe Mountains.	Occurs on soft powdery, gray soils.
S	Atriplex griffithsii	Griffith's saltbush (Chenopodiaceae)	SS	Found on dry lakebeds.	Found on the edges of dry lakebeds (playas) at 4,200 feet.
PF	Brickellia lemmoni	Wooton's bricklebush (Asteraceae)	SR	Found in Maverick Spring Canyon, Peloncillo Mountains.	Occurs under oaks among grasses.
PF	Brickellia simplex	Plain bricklebush (Asteraceae)	SR	Found in Maverick Spring Canyon and Skull Canyon, Peloncillo Mountains.	Occurs in grassy canyon bottoms under oaks between 5,600 and 5,756 feet.
PF	Castilleja organorum	Organ Mtn. Paintbrush (Scrophulariaceae)	SR	Found in Dripping Springs, Organ Mountains on public land.	Occurs on rocky sides of the Organ Mountains at altitudes of 5,700 feet.

APPENDIX L-1 (Continued)
THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES POTENTIALLY OCCURRING ON PUBLIC LAND

Plant Persistence$^{b/}$	Scientific Name	Common Name (Family)	Status$^{c/}$	Occurrences in the Resource Area	Habitat
C	Cereus greggii var. greggii	Night-blooming cereus (Cactaceae)	C-2/SE	Found in the Alamo Hueco Mountains Rough & Ready Hills, Las Uvas Mountains, Franklin Mountains, Flourite Ridge, Carrizalillo Hills, Little Hatchet Mountains, Sierra Rica Mountains, Peloncillo Mountains, Organ Mountains, Potrillo Mountains, and Pyramid Mountains.	Populations are widespread with a few individuals in each. Grows on gravelly range sites with bush muhly, Mormon tea, creosotebush, and range ratany; under or near creosotebush and mesquite in rocky areas; common at lower elevations; granite soil (rhyolite) and deep light soils. Altitudes 2,000 to 4,500 feet.
AF	Cleome multicaulis	Slender Spider-flower (Capparaceae)	C-2/SE	Collected in the Mesilla Valley, Dona Ana County and in Grant County.	Occurs on alkaline sinks, old saline lake beds, and cienegas from 3,000 to 7,000 feet.
C	Coryphantha orcuttii var. orcuttii	Pincushion (Cactaceae)	SE	Found in Mahoney Park, Florida Mountains on private land, found in the Big Hatchet Mountains, and collected on Granite Gap, Peloncillo Mountains.	Occurs on black limestone at altitudes of 5,200 feet (koenigii) or solitary to clustered with few individuals at altitudes of 7,000 feet (macraxina) or found on exposed outcrops with sotol, Agave, mesquite, and Acacia (orcuttii).
C	Coryphantha organensis	Organ Mountain pincushion (Cactaceae)	SE	Found on the Needles, in Dripping Springs, and Fillmore Canyon, Organ Mountains on public land and the military reservation.	Occurs on gravelly west-facing mountain slopes at 7,300 ft.
C	Coryphantha scheeri all varieties	Scheer's pincushion (Cactaceae)	SE	Widespread but extremely rare in southern New Mexico.	Occurs on open plains and flats, often in alluvial soils from 3,000 to 5,000 feet.
C	Coryphantha sandbergii	Sandberg's pincushion (Cactaceae)	SE	Found on the east slope of the San Andres Mountains.	Occurs on rocky limestone hillsides between 6,000 and 7,500 feet.
C	Coryphantha sneedii var. sneedii	Sneed's pincushion (Cactaceae)	FL/T/SE	Collected in Anthony Gap, Franklin Mountains on the military reservation.	Occurs on limestone hills on south-, and west-facing slopes with sotol, creosotebush, sumac, and Dalea between 4,300 and 5,400 feet.
PF	Dalea pulchra	None (Fabaceae)	SR	Found in Guadalupe Canyon, Guadalupe Mountains.	Found on rocky knolls.

APPENDIX L-1 (Continued)
THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES POTENTIALLY OCCURRING ON PUBLIC LAND

Plant Persistence[b/]	Scientific Name	Common Name (Family)	Status[c/]	Occurrences in the Resource Area	Habitat
PF	Delphinium occidentale var. quercicola	Duncecap larkspur (Ranunculaceae)	SR	Found in the Pinos Altos Mountains, Gila National Forest.	Growing in dry soils among scrub oak thickets.
PF	Draba stanleyi	Stanley's Whitlow-grass (Brassicaceae)	SR	Found on Little Mountain, near Las Cruces (Tortugas Mountain) and Organ Peak, Organ Mountains on the military reservation.	Occurs in mountainous regions; igneous crevices and boulders.
C	Echinocereus fasciculatus	Hedgehog cactus (Cactaceae)	SE	Found in the Peloncillo and Big Hatchet Mountains.	Occurs in the foothills and dry desert mountains.
AF	Erigonum densum	Wooly buckwheat (Polygonaceae)	SR	Collected or found near Bayard and Santa Rita on private land, and on Bear Mountain (near Silver City), Gila National Forest.	Seems to occur around disturbed open rocky areas at altitudes of 5,000 to 6,500 feet. May be extinct.
AF	Eustoma exaltatum	Catchfly gentian (Gentianaceae)	SE	Found in the Rio Grande Valley, north of Las Cruces on private land.	Occurs on alkaline, wet meadows in sod saltgrass at 3,500 feet.
PF	Graptopetalum rusbyi	Rusby's stonecrop (Crassulaceae)	SS	Found in Apache Box along Apache Creek.	Occurs along the creek in the shade with ferns and mosses on quartzite and boulders and in open places among rocks in canyons from 2,500 to 5,200 feet.
HS	Haplophyton crooksii	Cockroach plant (Apocynaceae)	SS	Found near Mount Summerford, Dona Ana Mountains, New Mexico State University (College Ranch).	Occurs on south slopes.
PF	Hedoma todensii	Todsen's pennyroyal (Lamiaceae)	FL/E/SE	Found on White Sands Missile Range.	Occurs on north- and east-facing slopes in gravelly gypseous limestone soils at 6,600 feet.
PF	Hexalectsis spicata	Crested coral root (Orchidaceae)	SE	Found in the Animas Mountains.	Found in open oak groves.
*NF	Hymenoxys olivacea	Olivaceous bitterweed (Asteraceae)	SR	Found in the Pinos Altos Mountains on private land.	Occurs in mountainous regions.

APPENDIX L-1 (Continued)
THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES POTENTIALLY OCCURRING ON PUBLIC LAND

Plant Persistence[b/]	Scientific Name	Common Name (Family)	Status[c/]	Occurrences in the Resource Area	Habitat
PF	Hymenoxys vasseyi	Vasey's bitterweed (Asteraceae)	SS	Found in the Organ Mountains	Occurs on dry hillsides from 4,500 to 6,500 feet.
PF	Jatropha macrorhiza	None (Euphorbiaceae)	SS	Found in Mahoney Park, Florida Mountains.	Found growing near a sandy arroyo in flat open country with sumac, Indian paintbrush, fourwing saltbush, and creosotebush.
AF	Limosella pubiflora	None (Scrophulariaceae)	SS	Found in the Animas Valley.	Occurs in and around temporary puddles.
C	Mammillaria viridiflora	Green-flowered pincushion cactus (Cactaceae)	SE	Collected or found in the Burro Mountains and Bear Mountain, Gila National Forest, Deadman Canyon on private land, and Skeleton Canyon, Peloncillo Mountains, Coronado National Forest.	Found on north-facing granite slopes and on rhyolite tuff and dry slopes in arid grasslands or along margins of desert from 4,500 to 6,500 feet.
C	Mammillaria wrightii var. wilcoxii	Wilcox pincushion (Cactaceae)	SE	Found in Animas and Peloncillo Mountains.	Occurs on rocky or gravelly slopes and canyons from 3,000 to 5,000 feet.
C	Mammillaria wrightii var. wrightii	Wright's pincushion (Cactaceae)	SE	Found in Dona Ana County and near Silver City.	Occurs on gravelly or sandy hills or plains in desert grassland to pinyon-juniper from 3,000 to 7,000 feet.
PF	Marah gilensis	Gila man-root (Cucurbitaceae)	SR	Found in the Gila River bottom.	Occurs on sandy soils near streams often in shaded areas from 4,000 to 5,000 feet.
PF	Metastelma arizonicum	None (Asclepiadaceae)	SR	Found in Guadalupe Canyon, Guadalupe Mountains.	Occurs on steep southwest-facing slopes.
C	Neolloydia intertexta	Visnagita (Cactaceae)	SE	Found in the Franklin and Tres Hermanas Mountains.	Occurs on the foothills of desert mountains.
PF	Oenothera organensis	Organ Mountain evening primrose (Onagraceae)	C-2/SE	Found in numerous canyons and on various peaks in the Organ Mountains mostly on the military reservation and public land.	Occurs in wet areas forming dense mats and in steep rocky canyons from 6,000 to 7,000 feet.

APPENDIX L-1 (Continued)
THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES POTENTIALLY OCCURRING ON PUBLIC LAND

Plant Persistence[b/]	Scientific Name	Common Name (Family)	Status[c/]	Occurrences in the Resource Area	Habitat
C	Opuntia arenaria	Sand prickly pear (Cactaceae)	C-2/SE	Found along the Rio Grande Valley on public and private lands and around the Franklin Mountains.	Grows on dunes and inter-dune sandy areas in small (5-12 plants) patches with creosotebush and mesquite or on sandy floodplains in arroyos at 3,600 feet.
C	Pediocactus papyracanthus	Grama grass cactus (Cactaceae)	C-2/SE	Collected around Pinos Altos near Silver City on private land.	Occurs on sandy soil on open slopes or flats in grassland; often among pinyon and juniper from 3,500 to 7,500 feet.
PF	Pediomelum trinervatum	Three-nerved scurfpea (Fabaceae)	C-2/SR	Found south of Hachita Valley.	Occurs on sand mesas at 5,000 feet.
PF	Penstemon alamosensis	Alamo penstemon (Scrophulariaceae)	C-2/SE	Collected on Black Mountain, San Andres Mountains on the military reservation.	Grows in crevices and ledges in limestone cliffs and along canyon bottoms at 5,000 feet.
PF	Penstemon lanceolatus	Scarlet-tube beard-tongue (Scrophulariaceae)	SR	Found in the Sierra de Las Uvas, Florida Mountains, Cooke's Range, Alamo Hueco Mountains, and Pyramid Mountains.	Found associated with creosotebush, snakeweed, and juniper on rocky soil in draws; on east-facing slopes with ocotillo, Wright silktassel, and Apache plume; scattered on southwest-facing slopes under mountain mahogany and oak and in open areas with various grasses; also on rocky canyons of pinyon-juniper or in pine woodlands.
PF	Penstemon linarioides ssp. maguirei	Maguire's penstemon (Scrophulariaceae)	SR	Found in the Lower Gila River Valley.	Very rare.

APPENDIX L-1 (Continued)
THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES POTENTIALLY OCCURRING ON PUBLIC LAND

Plant Persistence[b/]	Scientific Name	Common Name (Family)	Status[c/]	Occurrences in the Resource Area	Habitat
PF	Penstemon superbus	Superb penstemon (Scrophulariaceae)	SS	Found northwest of Silver City and in the Peloncillo Mountains; on private land in Guadalupe Canyon, Guadalupe Mountains.	Found in the gravels of canyon bottoms and in talus gravels below some cliffs; also occurred in an open arroyo bottom at 4,770 feet. Plants are commonly grazed.
PF	Perityle cernua	Nodding cliff daisy (Asteraceae)	C-2/SE	Collected in various canyons in the Organ Mountains on the military reservation.	Occurs in crevices and overhangs on northeast-facing and vertical monzonite and granite cliff faces at elevations of 5,800 to 7,200 feet. Areas receive no sunlight or less than 2 hours per day.
PF	Perityle lemmonii	Lemmon's rock daisy (Asteraceae)	SS	Found in the Big Hatchet Mountains.	Occurs on limestone cliffs at elevations of 5,300 to 5,600 feet. Is a peripheral species from Mexico, Texas, and Arizona.
PF	Perityle staurophylla var. homoflora	San Andres rock daisy (Asteraceae)	SS	Collected on Quartzite Mountain in San Andres Mountains on the military reservation.	Found on east-facing limestone cliffs at 5,800 feet and in the pinyon-juniper zone.
FN	Phanerophlebia auriculata	Mexican eared fern (Dryopteridaceae)	SR	Found near Dripping Springs, Organ Mountains on public land.	Occurs in cool, shady, moist areas on north-facing cliffs. Northern most location in the United States.
PF	Plummera ambigens	Pinaleno plummera (Asteraceae)	SS	Found in Maverick Spring Canyon, Peloncillo Mountains on private land.	Occurs on sandy gravels in canyon bottoms.
PF	Polygala rimulicola var. mescalerorum	Mescalero milkwort (Polygalaceae)	C-2/SE	Found in the San Andres Moutnains on the military reservation.	Occurs in cracks of sandy, limestone cliffs at 5,100 feet.
AG	Puccinellia parishii	Parish's alkali grass (Poaceae)	C-1/SE	Found in Grant County near Faywood Hot Springs.	Occurs on moist or marshy ground that is often alkaline.
PF	Salvia summa	Supreme sage (Lamiaceae)	SS	Found on Rattlesnake Ridge, Organ Mountains on the military reservation.	Occurs at the base of limestone outcrops on a ridge at 5,500 feet.
PF	Scrophularia laevis	Organ Mountain figwort (Scrophulariaceae)	SS	Found and collected on the Organ Needle and Organ Peak, Organ Mountains; on public land and the military reservation.	Found on the highest peak in the Organ Mountains and on a moist, shaded slope high on Organ Peak (7,200 feet).

APPENDIX L-1 (Continued)
THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES POTENTIALLY OCCURRING ON PUBLIC LAND

Plant Persistence[b/]	Scientific Name	Common Name (Family)	Status[c/]	Occurrences in the Resource Area	Habitat
PF	Scrophularia macrantha	Mimbres figwort (Scrophulariaceae)	C-1/SE	Found on Cooke's Peak, Cooke's Range and on private land in Grant County (San Lorenzo).	Found among rock debris in a cliff area facing northeast among pinyon, juniper, Arizona cypress, and ash, in a wet spot. Few plants present. Also found on a rocky ledge near the summit of a mountain in full or partial shade; from 6,500 to 7,500 feet.
AF	Sicyos glaber	Smooth cucumber (Cucurbitaceae)	SS	Collected in various locations on the west side of the Organ Mountains; on the military reservation and on public land.	Occurs in rocky soils on open slopes and in canyons on the west face of the Organ Mountains from 5,000 to 6,000 feet.
PF	Silene plankii	Campion; Plank's catchfly (Caryophyllaceae)	SS	Collected in the Organ Mountains on the military reservation.	Found on vertical east- and west-facing heavily shaded igneous cliffs in canyons and in niches receiving less than 2 hours sunlight per day between 5,800 and 8,000 feet.
*NF	Silene wrightii	Wright's catchfly (Caryophyllaceae)	SS	Found and collected near Kneeling Nun on private land and in the Cooke's Range.	Occurs in crevices of rocks and on sandstone ledges on north-facing ridges at 7,450 feet.
AF	Sphaeralcea procera	Porter's globemallow (Malvaceae)	SR	Collected in Chandler Draw northeast of Deming, New Mexico.	Occurs in sandy arroyos.
PF	Talinum humile	Pinos Altos flame flower (Portulacaceae)	C-2/SE	Found near the Kneeling Nun vista on Forest Service lands.	Occurs on rocky south-facing slopes in pinyon/juniper and Agave types from 6,000 to 8,000 feet.
PF	Talinum longipes	Long-stemmed flame flower (Portulacaceae)	SS	Collected on Tortugas Mountain, Dona Ana County.	Occurs on dry hills at low elevations.

APPENDIX L-1 (Concluded)
THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES POTENTIALLY OCCURRING ON PUBLIC LAND

Plant Persistence[b/]	Scientific Name	Common Name (Family)	Status[c/]	Occurrences in the Resource Area	Habitat
S	Vauquelinia californica var. pauciflora	Few-flowered rosewood (Rosaceae)	C-2/SE	Found in the Peloncillo Mountains, Coronado National Forest near Guadalupe Canyon.	Occurs on limestone with juniper, sumac, Wright silktassel and fendlerbush from 4,100 to 6,100 feet.
S	Yucca shottii	Yucca (Liliaceae)	SR	Found in the Peloncillo Mountains.	Mountainous regions.

Sources: Spellenburg, 1978; Spellenburg, 1979; New Mexico State Forestry, 1991.

Notes: a/ To ensure complete coverage of all threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant species, consideration was given to all species on public land or within 1 mile of public land.

b/ Plant Persistence:

* - Information pertaining to plant persistence was not available.
AG - Annual Grass
PG - Perennial Grass
AF - Annual Forb
BF - Biannual Forb
PF - Perennial Forb
NF - Native Forb
HS - Half Shrub
S - Shrub
T - Tree
FN - Fern
C - Cactus

c/ Status:

C - Candidate (species designated as "candidate species" by the Fish and Wildlife Service)
  1 - Enough information to list
  2 - Not enough information to list
FL/E - Federally Listed/Endangered
FL/T - Federally Listed/Threatened
PSE - Proposed for the State Endangered List
SE - State Endangered
SR - State Review List
SS - State Sensitive (species selected by the New Mexico State Forestry as a special concern element)

APPENDIX L-2
SPECIAL STATUS ANIMALS

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	STATUS	COUNTY*	HABITAT
Amphibians				
Colorado River Toad	Bufo alvarius	FC2 SE2	H	Mesquite, creosote, and other shrubs
Lowland leopard frog	Rana yavapaiensis	FC2	H	Specific habitat association unknown at present
Birds				
Olivaceous cormorant	Phalacrocorax olivacous	SE2	D G H	Generally found on larger bodies of water, rivers, and possibly playas
Mississippi kite	Ictinia mississippiensis	SE2	D	Riparian woodlands
Ferruginous hawk	Buteo reglais	FC2	D G H L	Open grassland or grassland/shrub
Common blackhawk	Buteogallus anthracinus	SE2	G H L	Riparian woodlands
Bald eagle	Haliaeetus leucocephalus	FE SE2	D L G	Habitat associated with water but there are some dry land areas where they occur
Peregrine falcon	Falco peregrinus	FE SE1		Cliffs in woodland/ forest types
Wild turkey (Gould's)	Meleagris gallopavo mexicana	SE2	H	Mountainous areas where large oaks predominate
White faced ibis	Plegaclis chihi	FC2	H	Marsh playas, irrigated land
Whooping crane	Grus americana	FE SE2	D L	Agricultural fields and valley pastures for feeding, roosting near water
Western snowy ploer	Charadrius nivosus	FC2	H	Alkali and salt flats
Long billed curlew	Numenius americanus	FC2	D G H L	Plains, rangelands and shorelines of lakes and marshs
Common ground dove	Columbiana passerina	SE1	D H	Agricultural areas and undeveloped shrubland near these areas
Broad billed hummingbird	Cyanothus latirostris	SE2	H	Riparian woodlands at low elevations
Costas hummingbird	Calypte costae	SE2	H	Arid sites near agricultural areas.
Lucifers hummingbird	Calothorax lucifer	SE2	H	Slopes and canyons in arid montane areas
Violet crowned hummingbird	Amazilia violiceps	SE2	H	Riparian woodlands at moderate elevations
White eared hummingbird	Hylocharis leucotis	SE2	H	Pine/oak woodland and adjacent riparian areas

APPENDIX L-2 (continued)
SPECIAL STATUS ANIMALS

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	STATUS	COUNTY*	HABITAT
Elegant torgon	*Torgon elegans*	SE1	H	Broadleaf woodlands
Gila woodpecker	*Melanerpes uropygialis*	SE2	G H	Low elevation woodlands along stream courses
Thick billed kingbird	*Tyrannus crassirostris*	SE2	H	Riparian areas
Bells vireo	*Vireo belli*	SE2	D G H L	Dense shrubland or woodland along lowland streams
Gray vireo	*Vireo vicinior*	SE2	D G H L	Open woodlands and shrublands
Varied bunting	*Passerina versicolor*	SE2	H	Dense mesquite stands in canyon bottoms
Baird's sparrow	*Ammodramus bairdii*	SE2	D H L	Desert grasslands
Yellow eyed junco	*Junco phaeonotus*	SE2	H	Pine/oak woodland and lower slopes in winter
McCowns longspur	*Calcarius mccownii*	SE2	D G H L	Habitat associated with desert grassland
Abert's towhee	*Pipilo aberti*	SE2	G H	Riparian areas
Northern beardless tyrannulet	*Camptostoma imberbe*	SE1	H	Dense lowland mesquite stands
Buff colored nightjar	*Caprimulugus ridgwayi*	SE1	H	Arid shrublands and woodlands
Fish				
Loachminnow	*Tiaroga cobitis*	FT SE2	G	Riffle areas with moderate to rapid water velocities.
Spikedace	*Meda fulgida*	FT SE2	G H	Cobble bottomed stream margins in winter and areas with sand and gravel in main channel
Mammals				
Colorado chipmonk (Organ Mountains)	*Eutamias quadrivuttatus*	FC2 SE2	D	Pineoak-juniper woodlands
White sided jackrabbit	*Lepus callotis*	FC2 SE1	H	Desert grassland
Southern pocket gopher	*Thomomys umbrinus*	SE2	H	Montane area above 6000 ft. but may occur in canyon bottoms down to 4500 ft.
Desert bighorn sheep	*Ovis canadensis mexicana*	SE1	D H	Open arid, rocky mountains

APPENDIX L-2 (Concluded)
SPECIAL STATUS ANIMALS

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	STATUS	COUNTY	HABITAT
Gray wolf (Mexican race)	Canus lupus baileyi	FE SE1		Mountain woodlands
Guadalupe pocket gopher	Thomomys guadlupiensis	FC2 SE2	H	
California leafnosed bat	Macrotus californicus	FC2	H	Caves and old mine shafts
Greater western mastiff bat	Eumops perotis	FC	H	Clifs, trees and abandoned buildings
Mexican longnosed bat	Leptonycteris nivalis	FC2 SE2	H	Caves and old mine tunnels
Occult little brown bat	Myotis lucifugus occulti	FC2	H	Hollow trees, caves, old mines
Sanborns longnosed bat	Leptonycteris sanborni	FE SE2	H	Caves and old mine tunnels
Southern yellow bat	Nycteris ega	SE2	H	Riparian woodlands
Spotted bat	Euderma maculatus	FC	D G H L	Open arid areas
Reptiles				
Mexican garter snake	Thomophis eques	FC2 SE2	G H	Pine/oak woodlands and grasslands with mesquite
Narrowhead gartersnake	Thomphis rufipunctatus	FC2 SE2	G H	Riparian areas along stream courses
Green ratsnake	Elaphe triapsis	SE2	G H	rocky canyon bottoms near streams or intermittent water
Gila monster	Heloderma suspectum	SE1	G H	Lower mountain slopes and outwash plains
Bunchgrass lizard	Sceloprus scularis	SE2	H	Intermountain valley grasslands
Ridgenose rattlesnake	Crotalus willardi	FT SE1	H	Canyon bottoms in montane areas
Mountain skink	Eumeces callicephalus	SE2	H	Riparian areas
Giant spotted whiptails	Cnemidophorus burti	FC SE2	H	Canyons and arroyos in and near mountains mesas
Gray checkered whiptail	Cnemidophorus dixoni	FC2 SE2	H	Desert grassland
Texas horned lizard	Phrynosoma cornutum	FC	D	Desert grass/shrubland

Source: BLM Files 1990.

Notes: *D = Doña Ana; G = Grant; H = Hidalgo; L = Luna

GLOSSARY

GLOSSARY

ADJACENT. LYING NEAR OR CLOSE TO; SOMETIMES, CONTIGUOUS; NEIGHBORING.

ADJUSTMENTS IN NUMBERS. Change (increase or decrease) of livestock numbers to conform to the amount of forage produced in an area considering other multiple uses.

AGGREGATE. A mineral material such as sand, gravel, shells, or broken stone.

ALLOTMENT. An area of land designated and managed for grazing of livestock.

ALLUVIAL. Pertaining to material that is transported and deposited by running water.

ALLUVIAL FAN. A fan-shaped accumulation of disintegrated soil material; water deposited and located in a position where the water departs from a steep course to enter upon a flat plain or open valley bottom.

ALLUVIUM. Material, including clay, silt, sand, gravel, or similar unconsolidated sediments, deposited by a stream or other body of running water.

ANIMAL UNIT (AU). Considered to be one mature cow (1,000 pounds) or its equivalent based upon average daily forage consumption of 26 pounds of dry matter per day.

ANIMAL UNIT MONTH (AUM). The amount of food or forage required by an animal unit for one month.

AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN (ACEC). Areas within the public land where special management attention is needed to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historical, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources, or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards.

ARROYO HABITAT. Intermittent drainages (arroyos) supporting a more varied vegetation composition than the surrounding upland areas.

AVIFAUNA. All birds of a given region.

AVOIDANCE AREAS. These are areas where future rights-of-way may be granted only when no feasible alternative route or designated right-of-way corridor is available. Special terms and conditions may be required.

BASALT. A dark to medium dark-colored, commonly extrusive, igneous rock.

BASIN AND RANGE. Topography characterized by a series of tilted fault block mountain ranges and broad intervening basins.

BASIN AND RANGE PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCE. A province in the southwestern United States characterized by a series of tilted fault blocks forming longitudinal ridges or mountains and broad intervening basin.

BOLSON. A flat-floored desert valley that drains toward a playa or central depression.

BROWSE. (noun) That part of leaf and twig growth of shrubs, woody vines, and trees available for animal consumption. (verb) To consume browse.

CALCAREOUS. Having sufficient accumulation of calcium carbonate ($CaCO_3$) to effervesce visibly when treated with cold dilute hydrochloric acid (HC1).

CALDERA. A large, basin-shaped volcanic depression the diameter of which is much greater than the vent.

CALICHE. A layer in the soil more or less cemented by calcium carbonate ($CACO_3$, commonly found in arid and semiarid regions.

CARBONACEOUS. 1. Coaly. 2. Pertaining to, or composed largely of, carbon. 3. The carbonaceous sediments include original organic tissues and subsequently produced derivatives of which the composition is chemically organized.

CLASSIFICATION OF LANDS. The process of determining whether the lands are more valuable or suitable for transfer or use under particular or various public land laws than for retention in Federal ownership for management purposes.

CLOSED BASIN. A basin is considered closed with respect to surface flow if its topography prevents the occurrence of visible outflow. It is closed hydrologically if neither surface nor underground outflow can occur.

COARSE TEXTURED SOIL. A soil consisting of mostly large particles. It includes sands, loamy sands, and sandy loams. (See Soil Texture.)

COLLUVIUM. A deposit of soil material and rock fragments accumulated at the base of steep slopes as a result of gravitational action.

COLORADO PLATEAU PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCE. A province situated between the Basin and Range and the Southern Rocky Mountains provinces. It is characterized by igneous structures, volcanoes, cinder cones, lava-capped plateaus, and extensive areas of nearly horizontal sedimentary rocks.

CONTIGUOUS. IN CLOSE PROXIMITY; NEIGHBORING; ADJOINING; NEAR IN SUCCESSION; IN ACTUAL CLOSE CONTACT; TOUCHING AT A POINT OR ALONG A BOUNDARY; BOUNDED OR TRAVERSED BY.

CONGLOMERATE. Clastic sedimentary rock composed of rounded fragments varying from small pebbles to large boulders in a cement of calcareous material such as iron oxide, silica, or hardened clay.

COW YEARLONG (CYL). The amount of forage necessary to sustain one cow for a 1-year period. One CYL equals 12 animal unit months.

CRITICAL HABITAT. Portions of the habitat of a wildlife population that, if destroyed or adversely modified, would result in a reduction of the population to a greater extent than destruction of other portions of the habitat.

CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY CLASSES.

Class I - Existing Data Inventory: an inventory study of a defined area designed to provide a narrative overview (cultural resource overview) derived from existing cultural resource information and to provide a compilation of existing cultural resource site record data on which to base the development of the BLM's site record system.

Class II - Sampling Field Inventory: a sample-oriented field inventory designed to locate and record, from surface and exposed profile indications, all cultural resource sites within a portion of a defined area in a manner which will allow an objective estimate of the nature and distribution of cultural resources in the entire defined area. The Class II inventory is a tool utilized in management and planning activities as an accurate predictor of cultural resources in the area of consideration. The primary area of consideration for the implementation of a Class II inventory is a planning unit. The secondary area is a specific project in which an intensive field inventory (Class III) is not practical or necessary.

Class III - Intensive Field Inventory: an intensive field inventory designed to locate and record, from surface and exposed profile indications, all cultural resource sites within a specified area. Normally, upon completion of such inventories in an area, no further cultural resource inventory work is needed. A Class III inventory is appropriate on small project areas, all areas to be disturbed, and primary cultural resource areas.

DEFERRED GRAZING. THE USE OF DEFERMENT IN GRAZING MANAGEMENT OF A MANAGEMENT UNIT, BUT NOT IN A SYSTEMATIC ROTATION INCLUDING OTHER UNITS.

DEFERRED ROTATION GRAZING. Discontinuance of grazing on various parts of rangeland in succeeding years, allowing each part of rest successively during the growing season to permit seed production, establishment of seedlings, or restoration of plant vigor. At least two, but usually three or more separate units are required.

DIRT TANK. Usually a permanent earthen structure for holding water temporarily. These are built in high rainfall runoff areas such as an arroyo, canyon, or swale area.

DIVERSITY. The relative degree of abundance of wildlife species, plant species, communities, habitats, or habitat features per unit of area.

DISPOSAL OF LAND. Transfer of land from Federal ownership, including sales, exchanges, and Recreation and Public Purposes.

DRAINAGE BASIN. A part of the surface of the earth that is occupied by a drainage system, which consists of a surface stream or a body of impounded surface water together with all tributary surface streams and bodies of impounded water.

ENDANGERED SPECIES.

Federally Listed: any species of animal or plant in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

State (Group I): species whose prospect of survival or recruitment in the State are in jeopardy in the foreseeable future.

State (Group II): species whose prospect of survival or recruitment within the State may become jeopardized in the foreseeable future.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA). A concise public document for which a Federal agency is responsible that serves to: (a) briefly provide sufficient evidence and analysis for determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact; (b) aid an agency's compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) when no environmental impact statement is necessary; (c) facilitate preparation of a statement when one is necessary. An EA includes brief discussions of the need for the proposal, of alternatives as required by Sec. 102(2) of NEPA, of the environmental impacts of the proposed action and other alternatives, and a listing of agencies and persons consulted.

EROSION CONTROL STRUCTURES. (or EROSION DIKE) Usually one large earthen, rock, wire, or cement structure used to hold large concentrated flows of water and release this water in small noneroding amounts.

EXCHANGE. A trading of public land (surface or subsurface estates) that usually does not have high public value, for land in other ownerships which does have value for public use, management and enjoyment. The exchange may be for the benefit of other Federal agencies as well as BLM.

EXCLUSION AREAS. These are areas where future rights-of-way may be granted only when mandated by law.

EXISTING UTILITY CORRIDORS. A parcel of land without fixed boundaries, limited only by terrain, land ownership, and environmental considerations.

FAIR MARKET VALUE. The amount in case,or on terms reasonably equivalent to cash, for which in all probability the property would be sold by a knowledgeable owner willing but not obligated to sell to a knowledgeable purchaser who desires but is not obligated to buy.

FINE TEXTURED SOIL. A soil consisting of large quantities of the fine fractions. It includes clay loam, sandy clay loam, silty clay loam, sandy clay, silty clay, and clay textured classes. (See Soil Texture.)

FLPMA. Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, which mandated the BLM Wilderness Review. Often referred to and pronounced "FLPMA."

FLUID LEASABLE MINERALS. IN THIS PLAN OIL, GAS, AND GEOTHERMAL RESOURCES ARE FLUID MINERALS THAT ARE ACQUIRED THROUGH THE MINERAL LEASING PROCESS.

FORAGE (COMPETITIVE). Plants which are used as food by large herbivores such as cattle, and by large and small wildlife.

FORB. Any herbaceous nonwoody plant that is not a grass or grass-like plant.

FORMATION. The primary unit of formal geologic mapping or description. Most formations possess certain distinctive or combinations or distinctive lithic features.

GEOTHERMAL ENERGY. Useful energy that can be extracted from naturally occurring steam, hot water, or hot rock in the earth's crust.

GRAVITY SURVEYS. A technique of applied geophysics; a survey using a gravity meter on the ground to measure variations in gravitational intensity.

GRAZING CAPACITY. The maximum livestock stocking rate possible without inducing damage to vegetation or related resources such as watershed. This incorporates factors such as suitability of the rangeland for grazing as well as the proper use which can be made on all of the plants within the area. Normally expressed in terms of acres per animal unit month (Ac/AUM) or sometimes referred to as the total AUMs that are available in any given area, such as an allotment. Areas that are unsuitable for livestock use are not computed in the grazing capacity. Grazing capacity may or may not be the same as the stocking rate.

GRAZING DISTRICT (BOUNDARY). Is the specific area within which the public land is administered under Section 3 of the Taylor Grazing Act. Public land outside grazing district boundaries is administered under Section 15 of the Taylor Grazing Act.

GRAZING LEASE. A document authorizing use of public land outside grazing districts for the purpose of grazing livestock under Section 15 of the Taylor Grazing Act.

GRAZING PREFERENCE. The total number of animal unit months of livestock grazing on public land apportioned and attached to base property owned or controlled by a permittee or lessee.

HABITAT. An area where a plant or animal lives. Sum total of environmental conditions in the area.

HABITAT MANAGEMENT PLAN (HMP). A written and officially approved plan for a specific geographical area of public land which identifies wildlife habitat and related objectives, establishes the sequence of actions for achieving objectives, and outlines procedures for evaluating accomplishments.

HARDENED. Development of recreation sites or areas to prevent or limit the impact of recreation use on soil, vegetation, and other resources. Methods of "hardening" include construction of trails and designated use areas such as campsites and picnic sites.

HERD UNIT. Big game habitat within a defined geographical area designated by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish for management purposes.

HISTORIC CULTURAL RESOURCES. Historic cultural resources include all mines, ranches, towns, resorts, railroads, trails, and other evidence of human use from the entrance of the Spanish to 1932.

HYDROCARBONS. Any organic compound, gaseous liquid, or solid consisting solely of carbon and hydrogen, such as crude oil.

IGNEOUS ROCKS. Rocks formed by solidification of magma.

INTRUSION. 1. A feature (landform, vegetation, or structure) which is generally considered out of context because of excessive contrast and disharmony with characteristic landscape. 2. Igneous rock formed by the emplacement of magma.

INTRUSIVE ROCK. Igneous rock formed by the emplacement of molten material in pre-existing rock.

KIND OF LIVESTOCK. Kinds of domestic livestock grazing on rangeland including cattle, horse, sheep, goats, or a combination of these. May be broken down to greater detail such as cows with calves, yearlings, steers, ewes, ewes with lambs, etc.

KNOWN GEOTHERMAL RESOURCE AREA. An area in which the geology, nearby discoveries, or competitive interests would indicate that commercial production of geothermal resources is probable.

LITHIC. A stone or rock exhibiting modification by humans. It generally applies to projectile points, scrapers, and chips, rather than ground stone.

LITHIC SCATTER. A prehistoric cultural site type where flakes, cores, and stone tools are located through the manufacture or use of the tools.

LOCATABLE MINERALS. TRADITIONAL "HARD ROCK" MINERALS SUCH AS GOLD, SILVER, LEAD, COPPER, ZINC AND INDUSTRIAL MINERALS SUCH AS FLUORSPAR, BARITE, AND HIGH-CALCIUM LIMESTONE.

MAGMA. Naturally occurring mobile rock material generated within the earth and capable of intrusion and extrusion from which igneous rocks are derived through solidification and related processes.

MAGNETIC PROSPECTING. A technique of applied geophysics; a survey using a magnetometer on the ground or from the air to measure variations in magnetic intensity.

MAJOR LAND RESOURCE AREA (MLRA). Large geographic areas of land characterized by particular patterns of soil, climate, water resources, and land use.

MALPAIS. A Spanish word meaning rough country underlain by dark basaltic lava.

MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN (MFP). A planning decision document that establishes for a given planning area land use allocations, coordination guidelines for multiple use, and management objectives to be achieved for each class of land use or protection. A MFP is prepared in three steps: (1) resource recommendations, (2) impact analysis and alternative development, and (3) decisionmaking.

MEDIUM TEXTURED SOIL. Intermediate between fine textured and coarse textured soil. It includes very fine sandy loam, loam, silt loam, and silt. (See Soil Texture.)

MELANISTIC. Any darkness of the skin, hair, or eyes resulting from high pigmentation.

METAMORPHISM. Process by which consolidated rocks are altered in composition, texture, or internal structure.

MINERALIZATION. The process of converting or being converted into a mineral.

MULTIPLE USE. The management of the various surface and subsurface resources so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people.

MULTIPLE USE MANAGEMENT. Consists of managing to meet one or more of the following objectives: (a) domestic livestock grazing, (b) fish and wildlife development and utilization, (c) industrial development, (d) mineral production, (e) occupancy, (f) outdoor recreation, (g) timber production, (h) watershed protection, (i) wilderness preservation, and (j) preservation of public values.

NONENERGY LEASABLE MINERALS. IN THIS PLAN SODIUM AND POTASSIUM ARE NONENERGY LEASABLE MINERALS THAT ARE ACQUIRED THROUGH THE MINERAL LEASING PROCESS.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLE (ORV). Any motorized vehicle designed for or capable of cross-country travel on or immediately over land, water, sand, snow, ice, marsh, swampland, or other terrain.

PALEOENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES. Studies using fossilized pollen and other geological and biological remains to determine past climatic conditions.

PERCOLATION. The downward entry of water into the soil.

PERENNIAL STREAM. A stream or portion of a stream which flows continuously.

PETROGLYPH. A form of rock art manufactured by incising, scratching, or pecking designs into rock surfaces.

PLAYA. The usually dry and nearly level lake plain that occupies the lowest part of a closed depression.

POTTERY SCATTER. A Mogollon to Historic cultural site type where pot-sherds are concentrated; usually a small site.

PUBLIC LAND. Any land and interest in land owned by the United States and administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the Bureau of Land Management, without regard to how the United States acquired ownership, except:

- lands located on the Outer Continental Shelf
- lands held for the benefit of Indians, Aleuts, and Eskimos
- lands in which the United States retains the minerals, but surface is private.

PUBLIC LAND LAWS. The body of laws which regulates the administration of the public land and the resources thereon.

PUMICE. Glassy lava, generally composed of rhyolite.

RANGE BETTERMENT FUND. The separate account in the National Treasury established by Section 401(b)(1) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, consisting of 50 percentum of all monies received by the United States as fees for grazing livestock on public land.

RANGE SITE. Rangeland that differs in its ability to produce a characteristic natural plant community. A range site is the product of all the environmental factors responsible for its development. It is capable of supporting a native plant community typified by an association of species that differ from other range sites in the kind or proportion of species or in total production.

RANGELAND. Land used for grazing by livestock and big game animals on which the vegetation is dominated by grasses, grass-like plants, forbs, or shrubs.

RANGELAND CONDITION (ECOLOGICAL). The present state of the vegetation on a range site in relation to the climax (natural potential) plant community for that site. It is an expression of the relative degree to which the kinds, proportions, and amounts of plants in a plant community resemble that of the climax plant community for the site. Rangeland condition is basically an ecological rating of the plant community.

Four classes are used to express the degree to which the composition of the present plant community reflects that of the climax.

Ecological Condition Class	Percentage of Present Plant Community that is Climax for the Range Site
Excellent	76 - 100
Good	51 - 75
Fair	26 - 50
Poor	0 - 25

RANGELAND CONDITION TREND. The direction of change in rangeland condition.

RANGELAND IMPROVEMENT. Any activity or program on or relating to rangelands which is designed to improve production of forage, change vegetation composition, control patterns of use, provide water, stabilize soil and water conditions, and provide habitat for livestock or wildlife.

RAPTOR. Any predatory bird (such as a falcon, hawk, eagle, or owl) that has feet with sharp talons or claws adapted for seizing prey and a hooked beak for tearing flesh.

RESEARCH NATURAL AREA. AN AREA THAT IS ESTABLISHED AND MAINTAINED FOR THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF RESEARCH AND EDUCATION BECAUSE THE LAND HAS ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS: (1) A TYPICAL REPRESENTATION OF A COMMON PLANT OR ANIMAL ASSOCIATION; (2) AN UNUSUAL PLANT OR ANIMAL ASSOCIATION; (3) A THREATENED OR ENDANGERED PLANT OR ANIMAL SPECIES; (4) A TYPICAL REPRESENTATION OF COMMON GEOLOGIC, SOIL, OR WATER FEATURES; OR (5) OUTSTANDING OR UNUSUAL GEOLOGIC, SOIL, OR WATER FEATURES.

REST ROTATION GRAZING SYSTEM. A grazing system providing for systematic and sequential grazing by livestock and resting from livestock use on a rangeland area to provide for the production of livestock while simultaneously maintaining or improving the vegetation and soil fertility.

RIFT. A system of fractures (faults) in the earth's crust and the associated valley or depression.

RIGHT-OF-WAY. Authorization to use public land for a specified purpose. Examples are roads, powerlines, pipelines, water wells, and communication sites.

RIPARIAN VEGETATION. Vegetation which occurs in or adjacent to drainage ways or their floodplains.

ROAD. For the purpose of the BLM's wilderness inventory, the following definition has been adopted from the legislative history of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act:

"The word 'roadless' refers to the absence of roads which have been improved and maintained by mechanical means to ensure relatively regular and continuous use. A trail maintained solely by the passage of vehicles does not constitute a road."

To clarify this definition, the following subdefinitions also apply:

"Improved and maintained" - Actions taken physically by man to keep a road open to vehicular traffic. "Improved" does not necessarily mean formal construction. "Maintained" does not necessarily mean annual maintenance.

"Mechanical means" - Use of hand or power machinery or tools.

"Relatively regular and continuous use" - Vehicular use which has occurred and will continue to occur on a relatively regular basis. Examples are: access roads for equipment to maintain a stock water tank or other established water sources, access roads to maintained recreation sites or facilities, or access roads to mining claims.

ROCK ART (PETROGLYPH OR PICTOGRAPH). An Archaic to Modern cultural site type consisting of incised figures such as people, animals, plants, or abstracts on a rock surface.

ROCK SHELTER. A cultural site type representative of all periods consisting of an area protected by an overhanging cliff. Often associated with the same materials as a campsite or rock art.

SACRIFICE AREA. A RELATIVELY SMALL AREA OF LAND IN A GRAZING UNIT THAT MAY STILL BE OVERUSED AFTER PRACTICAL MEASURES FOR SECURING UNIFORM GRAZING DISTRIBUTION HAVE BEEN INSTALLED.

SALABLE MINERALS. THESE ARE COMMON VARIETY MINERAL MATERIALS SUCH AS SAND, GRAVEL, CINDERS, AND BUILDING STONE THAT ARE SOLD ON A PERMIT BASIS.

SEDIMENTARY ROCKS. Rocks formed by the consolidation of loose sediment. Sedimentary is one of the three classes of rocks, the other two being igneous and metamorphic.

SOIL SERIES. A group of soils having genetic horizons (layers) that, except for texture of the surface layer, have similar characteristics and arrangement in the profile.

SOIL TEXTURE. The relative proportions of sand, silt, and clay in a soil as described by classes of soil texture. Soil textural classes recognized are:

sand
loamy sand
sandy loam
loam
silt loam
silt
sandy clay loam
clay loam
silty clay loam
silty clay
clay

Modifiers placed on textural classes when appropriate are:

gravelly
very gravelly
cobbly
very cobbly
stony
very stony

SPLIT ESTATE. Refers to the situation where the mineral estate is owned or controlled by a party other than the owner of the surface of the same land area.

THREATENED SPECIES. Any species likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant part of its range.

TUFF A compacted deposit of volcanic ash and dust.

UPLIFT. Elevation of any part of the earth's surface relative to some other parts.

VEGETATION TREATMENTS. Methods used to control the growth and spread of undesirable vegetation. Control can be by chemical or mechanical means or by fire.

VILLAGE. A Mogollon to Historic cultural site type consisting of a permanent habitation area containing several types of artifacts, evidence of agriculture, and structures.

VISUAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (VRM) CLASSES. VRM Classes are based on relative visual ratings of inventoried lands. Each class describes the different degree of modification allowed to the basic elements of the landscape. The following are the minimum management objective for each class.

Class I: Natural ecological changes and very limited management activity are allowed. Any contrast created within the characteristic landscape must not attract attention. This classification is applied to Visual Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, wilderness areas, wild and scenic rivers, and other similar situations.

Class II: Changes in any of the basic elements (form, line, color, texture) caused by a management activity should not be evident in the landscape. A contrast may be seen but should not attract attention.

Class III: Contrasts to the basic elements caused by a management activity may be evident and begin to attract attention in the landscape. The changes, however, should remain subordinate in the existing landscape.

Class IV: Contrasts may attract attention and be a dominant feature in the landscape in terms of scale. However, the changes should repeat the basic elements of the landscape.

VOLCANIC ROCK. An igneous rock resulting from volcanic action at or near the earth's surface.

WILDERNESS. The definition contained in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964 is as follows: "A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." Wilderness is an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least 5,000 acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features or scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

WILDERNESS AREA. An area formally designated by Congress as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS. Those characteristics of wilderness as described in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act. These include size, naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined type of recreation, and supplemental values.

WILDERNESS INVENTORY. An evaluation of the public land in the form of a written description an a map showing those lands that meet the wilderness criteria as established under Section 603(a) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act. The lands meeting the criteria will be referred to as Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs). Those lands identified as not meeting wilderness criteria will be released from further wilderness consideration.

WILDERNESS REVIEW. The term used to cover the entire wilderness inventory, study, and reporting phases of the wilderness program of the BLM.

WILDERNESS STUDY. The process of analyzing and planning wilderness preservation opportunities along with other resource opportunities within the BLM's planning system.

WILDLIFE. Includes all species of mammals, birds, molluscs, crustaceans, amphibians, reptiles, or their progeny or eggs which, whether raised in captivity or not, are normally found in a wild state. Feral horses and burrows are excluded.

WITHDRAWAL. An action that restricts the use of public land and segregates the land from some or all of the public land or mineral laws.

YEARLONG GRAZING. Continuous grazing for a calendar year.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
ADC	Animal Damage Control
AIRFA	American Indian Religious Freedom Act
AMP	Allotment Management Plan
ARPA	Archaeological Resources Protection Act
AUM	Animal Unit Month
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
C&MU	Classification and Multiple Use Act
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act
FWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
HMP	Habitat Management Plan
IMP	Interim Management Policy
ISA	Instant Study Area
KGRA	Known Geothermal Resource Area
MFP	Management Framework Plan
MLRA	Major Land Resource Area
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSA	Management Situation Analysis
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NMDGF	New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
NMSO	New Mexico State Office (BLM)
NMSU	New Mexico State University
NNL	National Natural Landmark
NOI	Notice of Intent
NOL	Not Open to Leasing
NSO	No Surface Occupancy
OMRL	Organ Mountains Recreation Lands
ONA	Outstanding Natural Area
ORV	Off-Road Vehicle
PRIA	Public Rangelands Improvement Act
RNA	Research Natural Area
ROS	Recreation Opportunity Spectrum
ROD	Record of Decision
R&PP	Recreation and Public Purpose
SCORP	Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
SCS	Soil Conservation Service
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SHS	Standard Habitat Site
SMA	Special Management Area
SRMA	Special Recreation Management Area
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
VRM	Visual Resource Management
WSA	Wilderness Study Area
WSMR	White Sands Missile Range

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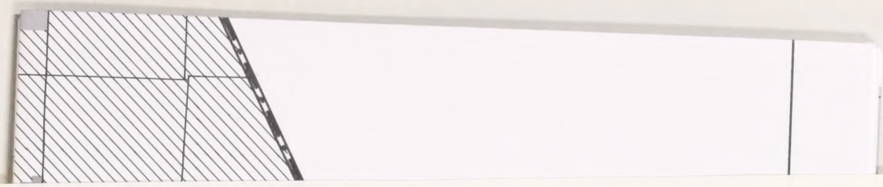
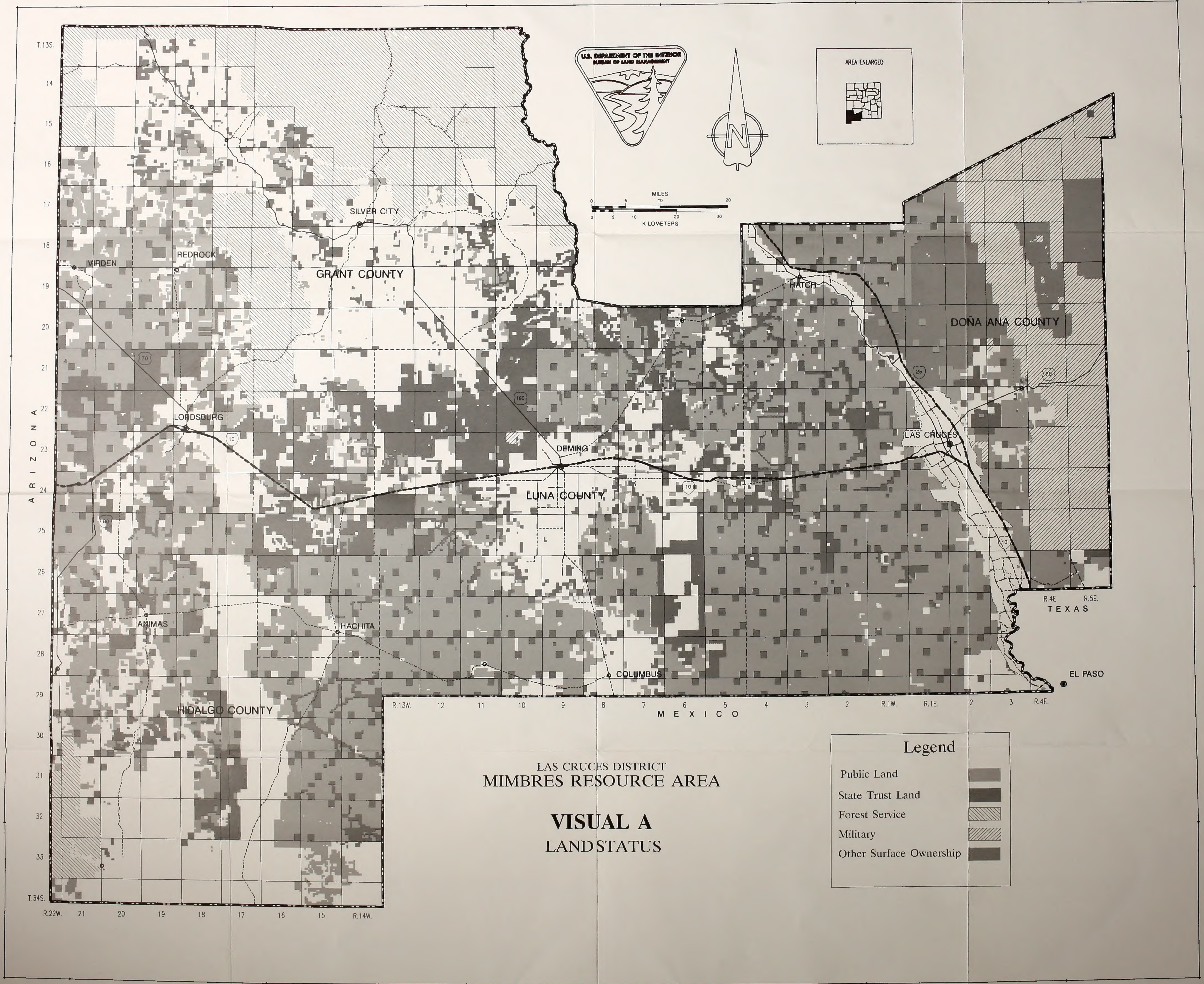
*U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1992-0-673-073/67001




U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
N
AREA ENLARGED
MILES
0
5
10
20
KILOMETERS
0
5
10
20
30
T.13S.
14
15
16
17
18
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20
21
22
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24
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28
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31
32
33
T.34S.
R.22W.
21
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19
18
17
16
15
R.14W.
R.13W.
12
11
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
R.1W.
R.1E.
2
3
R.4E.
R.4E.
R.5E.
ARIZONA
TEXAS
MEXICO
SILVER CITY
VIRDEN
REDROCK
GRANT COUNTY
HATCH
DOÑA ANA COUNTY
LORDSBURG
DEMING
LAS CRUCES
LUNA COUNTY
ANIMAS
HACHITA
COLUMBUS
EL PASO
HIDALGO COUNTY
70
180
10
25
80
Legend
Public Land
State Trust Land
Forest Service
Military
Other Surface Ownership

LAS CRUCES DISTRICT
MIMBRES RESOURCE AREA

VISUAL A
LAND STATUS

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Las Cruces District Office
1800 Marquess St.
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

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